

# 2015 IRAQ HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN

## OVERVIEW: IRAQ ON THE BRINK



ONLY URGENT ACTION CAN  
**SAVE IRAQ**  
AND ITS PEOPLE

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## A message from the Iraq Humanitarian Country Team

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq deserves more attention and more support than it is receiving. Millions of people are in trouble, struggling to cope with displacement and the horrors inflicted by combatants during one of the most brutal insurgencies in the world.

Millions more are likely to need help from the international community during the counter-offensive to reclaim Iraqi territory.

The Iraqi people have opened their homes, helping to protect and support families who have lost everything. The Iraqi Government has stepped forward, giving food, shelter, water, healthcare, education and cash to more than three million displaced persons.

Donors have generously supported the Iraqi operation, allowing UN agencies and non-governmental organizations to distribute life-saving assistance to people in accessible areas throughout the country.

Partners are now faced with a stark reality. The Government is no longer able to carry the full burden of supporting its displaced populations. Just when humanitarian partners are needed the most, they are out of money, forced to close programmes and terminate operations.

At a time when Iraq is on the brink and so much is at stake, international engagement needs to be rebalanced to include humanitarian assistance. Failure to do so will have catastrophic consequences in Iraq, the region, and beyond.

## Mass displacement and mounting needs

Today, over 8.2 million people in Iraq require immediate humanitarian support as a direct consequence of violence and conflict linked to the take-over of territory by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the counter-insurgency operation launched by the Government and its allied forces.

Since January 2014, 2.9 million people have fled their homes in three mass waves of displacement, and multiple smaller ones.

Displaced families have found safety in villages, towns and cities throughout the country, welcomed generously by communities and supported by the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government.



Credit: OCHA/Jason Athanasiadis

*A man and his disabled daughter, displaced from Mosul. He said that he felt desperate because he had neither the money to provide for her treatment, nor was the necessary medical expertise available in the camp where they currently live.*

## **A nation under threat**

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq is a protection crisis above all else. Populations have been subjected to mass executions, systematic rape and horrendous acts of violence. Children have been used as suicide bombers and human shields. Women and girls have been enslaved and subjected to terrible sexual violence.

Civilians who have remained in ISIL areas are at risk of reprisal by combatants as they retake territory from ISIL.

The crisis is impacting virtually all aspects of Iraq's economy and society, and threatening the major efforts underway to build national reconciliation.

Displaced persons are currently living in more than 3,000 locations throughout the country; more than 90 per cent are living outside of camps, hosted by communities who have done their best to protect and provide for them.

Half of all displaced need urgent shelter support; 700,000 are surviving in unfinished and abandoned buildings, makeshift collective centres and spontaneous settlements.

Health providers are struggling to deliver basic support in areas with high concentrations of displaced people. Water and sanitation systems are in disrepair, increasing the risk of major public health emergencies.

Destitution is widespread, impacting displaced families and host communities alike. Production and supply shortages and localized increases in demand have forced up the cost of basic commodities, including food. At least 4.4 million people are now food insecure.

## **The most vulnerable pay the highest price**

Children are the hardest-hit victims of the conflict, traumatised by violence and destitution, exposed to abuse, suffering from inadequate health care and at risk of poor nutrition. Almost 3 million children and adolescents affected by the conflict do not have access to basic education.

Families are eager to return to their communities but cannot do so without support. They find their communities destroyed, infrastructure and property wrecked and markets abandoned. Booby-trapped buildings and IED-contaminated roads are an additional hazard.

The Government has provided mass relief in the form of cash grants, health and education support, shelter and food, but is faced, for the first time in decades, with a massive fiscal gap resulting from the slump in oil prices and the high costs of the ISIL counterinsurgency.

## **The immediate humanitarian outlook**

Humanitarian needs in Iraq are staggering. Country-wide assessments show that 8.2 million Iraqis, nearly 25 percent of the population, require some form of humanitarian assistance through the end of December 2015.

Nearly 8 million people need protection assistance. Close to 6.7 million require access to essential health services. Of the 7.1 million people requiring water, sanitation and hygiene assistance across the country, 4.1 million are in critical need, their situation likely to become increasingly desperate in the summer months.

## **The humanitarian partners' response**

Humanitarian partners have played a major role, complementing the support provided by the Government, community groups, religious endowments and the Iraqi people.

Partners have provided food to two million people each month, helped families survive the winter and helped to build 12 formal IDP camps and 30 collective centres.

Health services have reached millions and 5.3 million children have been vaccinated against polio. Emergency cash assistance has been disbursed to tens of thousands of displaced vulnerable people and emergency livelihoods support has kept many Iraqis and host communities from falling into destitution.

Thousands of life-saving kits have been distributed through the Rapid Response Mechanism, reaching people within 48 hours of their displacement.

Schools have been rehabilitated, temporary learning spaces constructed and hundreds of teachers trained.

Aid is being delivered in a more effective and coordinated manner under a contingency plan focusing on those truly in need and whom the Government's own services cannot reach.

But these efforts are quickly running out of money. Less than 40 per cent of funding required for the 2014-15 Iraq humanitarian response has been received.

Without an immediate injection of funds, more than half of the humanitarian operation will shut down or be curtailed in coming months. Frontline health services have begun shutting down. Water programs and protection activities are also under threat.

## 2015 Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan

The 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan is an appeal for nearly \$500 million USD to cover basic life-saving support over the next six critical months. The response will target the most vulnerable with essential, life-saving support.

The Iraqi Government will pay its share. The entire emergency response has been developed with clear intent to transition from external humanitarian assistance to eventual management by the Government as soon as financially and logistically feasible.

The operation's five strategic objectives reflect the complex realities humanitarian partners face in Iraq and have been adopted in full recognition of the limits of humanitarian action in a context of volatile all-out armed conflict, extreme restrictions on access, deep-running political divisions and the Government's paralyzing fiscal gap.

In prioritizing the aims of the operation, the Humanitarian Country Team is privileging the role of protection, recognizing its moral responsibility to maintain assistance to people dependent on aid to survive, elevating the imperative to reach people, even in areas outside Government control, insisting on the need for principled returns and aiming at a realistic exit strategy.

