



Operational Updates

THE EXPANDED HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FUND (ERF)

Project and Financial Status:

As of March 31, 2008, a total of 33¹ project proposals have been submitted to the ERF since August 2007. Nine project proposals have been submitted by international NGOs and twenty-two by Iraqi NGOs. Twenty-two projects have been approved, with 8 completed projects and 14 ongoing projects, with a total value of \$ 3,543,152. A further 7 projects are currently under consideration, totalling approximately \$922,440. Four projects have been rejected by the Technical Review Committee (TRC).

A total of \$7,162,442 has been donated to the ERF, including the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocation of \$5 million to cover the immediate funding deficit pending receipt of anticipated CAP funds. Further contributions to the ERF are urgently required.

Current partners of the ERF include: Kurdistan Villages Reconstruction Organization, Voice of Independent Women, Heartland Alliance, Helan Organization, Muslim Aid, Love and Peace Society, Kurdistan Reconstruction and Development.

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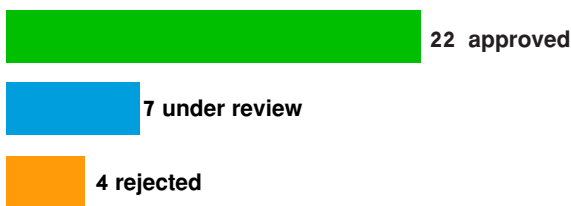
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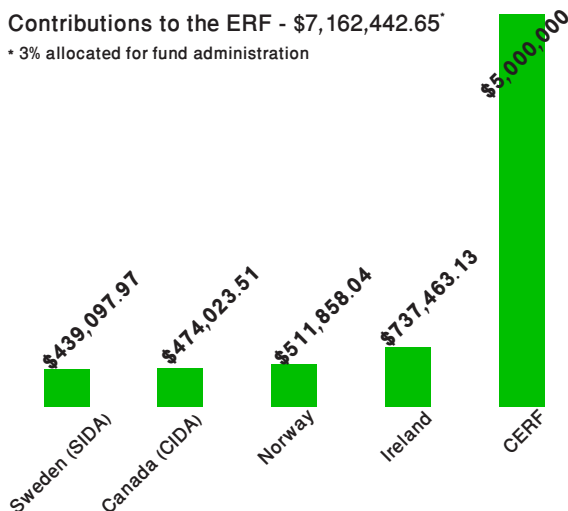
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Status of ERF projects submitted



Contributions to the ERF - \$7,162,442.65*

* 3% allocated for fund administration



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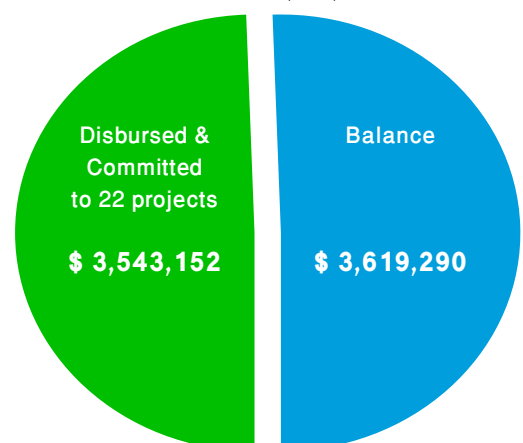


Table 1: Projects funded by the ERF

NO.	GOVERNORATE	SECTOR / ACTIVITIES	BENEFICIARIES (APPROX.)
1.	Kerbala, Missan, Wassit	WATSAN and Shelter	8,520
2.	Al-Anbar	Food security & NFIs	24,000
3.	Dahuk	WATSAN	320
4.	Baghdad	Food security & NFIs	3,600
5.	Sulaymaniyah	Food security & NFIs	1,800
6.	Babylon	Food security & NFIs	4,800
7.	Thi Qar	Food security & NFIs	6,000
8.	Baghdad	NFIs	314
9.	Erbil	NFIs	12,000
10.	Baghdad - Anbar	Food Security	12,600
11.	Baghdad	Health	4,800
12.	Diyala, Basrah, Thi Qar	Health	9,000
13.	Wassit	Health	5,000
14.	Najaf	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	18,000

Projects completed under the ERF:

To date, 8 projects have been completed under the ERF targeting a total of 4,460 families and 1,500 orphans (approximately 28,260 individuals) in six governorates. These projects assisted vulnerable and displaced families through the provision of essential food² and non-food items (NFIs). Four of these 8 projects were completed during the reporting period:

1. Mercy Corps provided NFIs for winterization to 1,403 internally displaced families and 17 extremely vulnerable families in host communities in Diyala, Tameem and Salah al-Din governorates.
2. A total of 1,540 vulnerable IDP families throughout Qadissiya governorate received food and NFIs through a project implemented by Todya Organisation.
3. Food and NFIs were distributed to 1,500 IDP families in Kerbala and Diyala governorates through a project implemented by Al Mamoura Humanitarian Establishment.
4. A project implemented by New Iraqi Women in Babylon governorate targeted 1,500 orphans. The children received clothes, basic hygiene supplies and kerosene heaters.



Photo: Mercy Corps

IDPs in three governorates receive winterization assistance to improve their shelters through an ERF-funded Mercy Corps project.

THE NGO MICRO GRANT

Two projects are ongoing under the NGO Micro Grant: one to provide food and shelter distribution targeting 1,352 families in Tameem (Kirkuk) governorate, and the second project targeting around 4,000 families and providing them with health services through a mobile clinic in the remote areas in Najaf governorate. Current implementation partners include: Iraqi Institution for Development and Cultural Humanitarian Iraq of Future Organisation (CHIFO).

With these two projects, the NGO Micro Grant funding stands at zero balance. OCHA is currently not receiving further proposals under this grant pending receipt of urgently needed funds.

NGO CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

In order to ensure that positive working relationships established between OCHA and NGOs through the NGO Micro Grant are built on and used for the ERF, and as part of OCHA's mandate to strengthen the capacity of NGOs working in Iraq, two NGO capacity building training workshops on proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation were held in early 2007.

Both trainings were conducted in Baghdad and organised by Al Yaqeen Centre with funding from OCHA Iraq. Together, the two trainings targeted representatives from 38 national and international organizations who have either implemented projects or are potential partners to the ERF and the NGO Micro Grant. The goal of this workshop was to build and strengthen the capacity of NGOs in project development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, with the aim of increasing their efficiency and effectiveness in humanitarian relief.

As a follow-up to the training, Al Yaqeen Centre will be requested to visit each of the participating NGOs while they are implementing projects to assess to what extent the organisations are applying the skills they acquired during the capacity building training to their operations in the field.



NGO Capacity building training, Baghdad.



Photo: Disabled Children Care Organisation
Women collecting water in Qadissiya governorate. With funds from the NGO Micro-Grant, Disabled Children Care Organisation assisted 500 IDP families here with food and NFIs.

HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW

Five years after the outbreak of the war in Iraq, the humanitarian situation in most of the country remains among the most critical in the world. As violent conflict continues in Iraq, millions of Iraqis face widespread suffering and deprivation. There are grave protection concerns and, according to a recent Amnesty International report³, "the human rights situation is bleak."

Clashes in Baghdad, Basrah and Southern Iraq

On Sunday, 30 March, aides to Moqtada al Sadr issued a statement in Najaf calling on his followers to stop battling government forces in Basrah and all other governorates. The statement sought to stem the violence that ensued following the Iraqi government crackdown on so called 'criminals and outlaws' in Basrah, launched on 25 March. The military operation sparked a spiral of violence in southern Iraqi towns and cities, as well as in Shi'a dominated areas in Baghdad. Reports from the most affected areas, including Sadr City in Baghdad and Basrah, indicate that curfews were widespread; water systems and electricity supplies were not functioning; there were shortages in fuel supplies; households unable to stock-pile essential items due to the suddenness of the curfew were running out of food; shops were closed and when they re-opened essential food items had increased in price; and hospitals were in urgent need of medical supplies, especially blood bags. The UN and NGOs were able to begin emergency operations in Basrah before hostilities halted, and as the situation eased access also improved.

Health and Water and Sanitation

As summer approaches in Iraq, one of the key humanitarian concerns is the lack of access to clean drinking water. This year drought conditions are forecast: Indications are that the water table has dropped to low levels due to overuse and unusually low levels of rain during the winter months. To further compound the problem, the dilapidated state of the water infrastructure throughout the country means that available water is wasted and does not reach much of the population. Although there have been no reports of new cholera cases in the past months, it is likely that a second wave of cholera will occur as temperatures rise in the spring, exacerbated by a lack of adequate water resources.

The drought could also have a devastating impact on the spread of "leishmaniasis", which continues to spread in Iraq's southern governorate of Qadissiya, about 130 km south of Baghdad, with at least 275 cases so far. Kalaazar can kill, and causes fever, weight loss and anaemia. A single sand fly bite can be enough to transmit the disease. Local health authorities are struggling with a shortage of medicines to treat the disease. Overcrowded living conditions in southern Iraq, where it is difficult to access clean water, and plenty of stagnant pools of water in which flies can breed, has hampered progress against the disease. The peak transmission season for leishmaniasis typically begins in May.

Case Study: Qalawa Camp

WHO conducted a field trip to Qalawa camp, Sulimaniyah governorate, in March to evaluate the humanitarian situation. The camp is home to approximately 189 Arab IDP families and 49 Kurdish families. The humanitarian situation in Qalawa is dire: The majority of the families live in tents; there are insufficient latrines; there are no wells and water is provided by water trucks, which are reliable, and expensive. There is no garbage collection and solid waste is accumulating within the camp. Families do not have access to adequate medical care.

Water & Sanitation Facts and Figures

1. Only 40% of Iraqis have a reliable source of safe drinking water⁴.
2. 81% of Iraqis report problems with their daily supply of water⁵.
3. 20% of families outside of Baghdad have access to working sewage facilities⁶.
4. Existing sewage treatment plants operate at only 17% capacity, discharging large volumes of untreated waste into Iraq's waterways. Sewage is a common sight in many neighbourhoods⁷.
5. IDPs assessed by IOM⁸.
 - 20.5% consider access to water their priority
 - 6.6% consider sanitation their priority
 - 1.9% consider hygiene their priority

Update on the Consolidated Appeal Process

The joint emergency appeal (CAP) requests \$265 million to respond to urgent humanitarian needs inside Iraq in 2008. This joint appeal brings together 14 UN agencies and International Organisations, and 10 NGOs in a partnership.

CAP Funding Update:

Total requirements:	USD 265 million
Funding (commitment/contributions):	USD 35.7 million (13%)
Pledges (uncommitted):	USD 160.9 million

Funding status by sector:

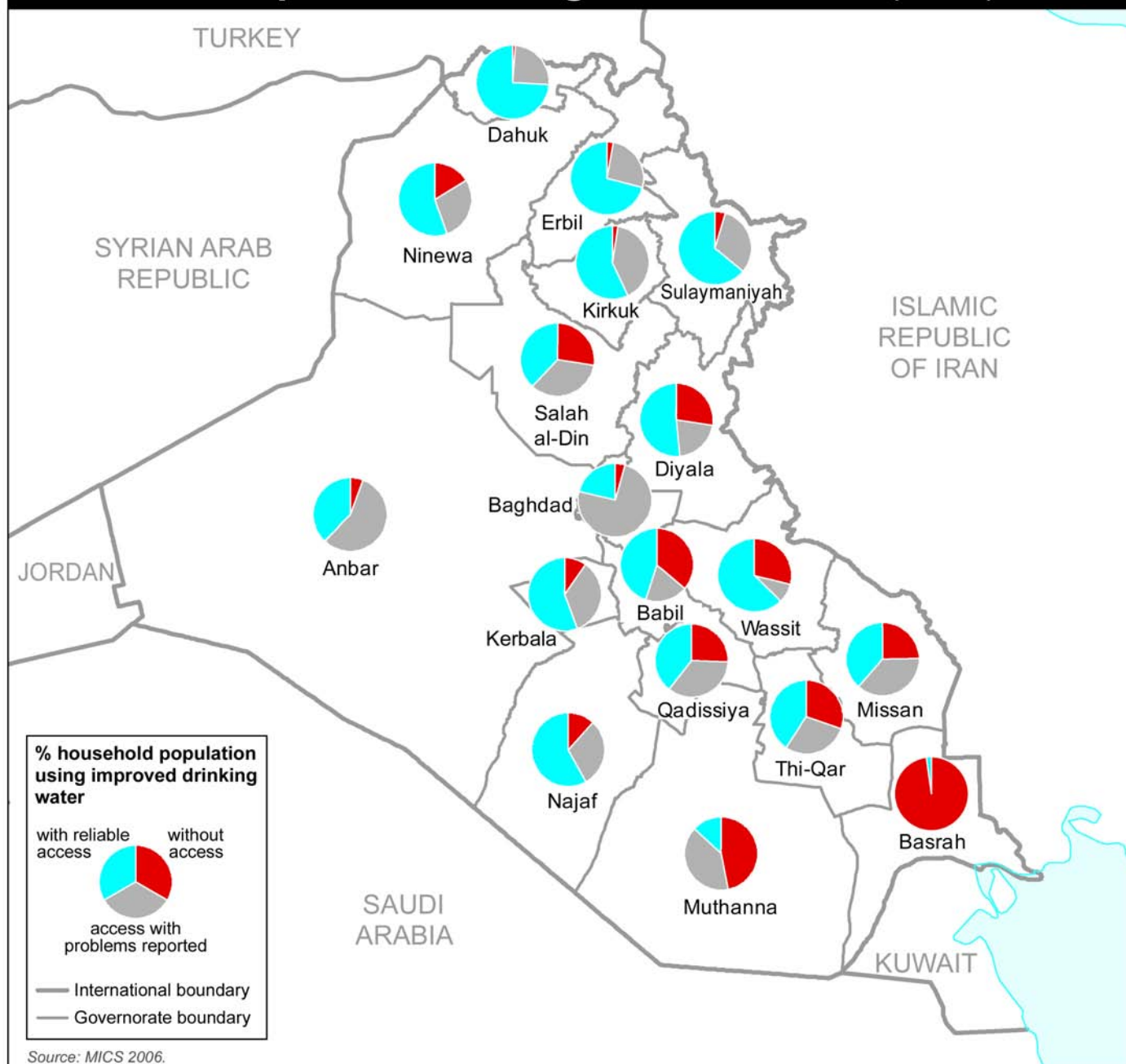
- Coordination and Support Services: USD 2.1 million (32%) of requirements
- Food: USD 32.5 million (34%) of requirements
- Health: USD 1.1 million (3%) of requirements
- Other sectors: No funding (commitments/contributions) to date



Photo: WHO.

Qalawa camp in Sulaymaniyah governorate

Access to improved drinking water sources (2006)



Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq

BASIC FACTS & FIGURES

- It is estimated that over 2.7 million people are currently displaced inside Iraq as of mid-November 2007. Of these, 1.2 million were displaced after February 2006.
- Four million people in Iraq, corresponding to 15 percent of the population, are considered food insecure. As for IDPs, access to food is a priority need for almost 71 percent.
- Access to shelter is considered a priority need by over 72 percent of Iraqi IDPs.
- Access to education is considered a priority need by almost six percent of IDPs surveyed.
- Only one in three Iraqi children under the age of five has access to safe drinking water.
- The under-five mortality rate is currently estimated at 41 per 1000 live births. Diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections account for about two out of three under-five deaths, with malnutrition a major contributing factor.

(Sources: UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, IOM, 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.)



Beneficiary Story

Mercy Corps' Winterization Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons

Mercy Corps has provided non-food items for winterization to 1,403 IDP families and 17 extremely vulnerable families in host communities in Diyala, Tameem and Salah al-Din governorates.

One of the beneficiaries was Asma'a Ali, a 25-year-old mother with a family of seven:

"We were living in Al Mujaddad village in Khalis district of Diyala. My husband used to work as a farmer. Our life was quiet and peaceful. Then the security situation started deteriorating. Armed groups were controlling life and could be seen everywhere. The army arrived to take over the control of the situation. During one of the US air raids, my father got hit and he died. The rest of us were not able to move out of the house out of fear and insecurity, and we lived inside day after day. Every time we heard a plane engine, we were terrified and expected the worse, no one in the village knew which house would be hit next, if the attack was coming from the air or the ground. We decided to move to Tikrit and rented a small house in 2006. We brought no possessions with us. With the current demand for work, job opportunities are limited. My husband gets employment day by day and is not able to get work every day. We are in real need of the distribution.

In Next Month's Issue of the ERF Bulletin:

- Humanitarian Priorities Strategy
- Project Impact to date

Endnote

1. Two NGO's have submitted twice
2. The food distribution projects provided each beneficiary with the sphere standards' daily recommended calorie intake of 2,100 calories for a period of one month.
3. "Carnage and Despair: Iraq Five Years On".
4. Iraq MICS2006: UNICEF.
5. Iraq MICS2006: UNICEF.
6. Iraq MMPW.
7. Iraq MMPW.
8. Iraq Displacement Assessment and Statistics, IOM, 1Feb2008, p. 2-3.

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Photo: Mercy Corps