

UNHCR Iraq Significant Achievements 2009

- ⇒ Rehabilitation and reconstruction of **8,501 units** out of the original planning figure of **10,485 units**. This target is expected to be reached by end of March 2010 when the 2009 programs are finalized. The completed shelters benefited **56,238** people, 62% are IDP returnees. Complementary to this, UNHCR finalized some **45 water/sanitation projects**; distributed **28,779 NFI kits**, **7,147 hygiene kits**, **1,730 sanitary items** and **1,444 single items** Iraq-wide throughout the year, benefiting some **224,622 refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees and local communities**.
- ⇒ Establishment of **12 Return Integration Community Centers (RICCs)** that aim to expand UNHCR's capacity to reach out to return communities and address the social, assistance and information needs of returning displaced people and refugees. Six of the RICCs are based in Baghdad where the majority of returns is taking place, with one center in each of the following locations; Basrah, Missan (Amara), Anbar (Ramadi), Diyala (Baquba), Kirkuk and Ninewa (Mosul).
- ⇒ As part of its outreach mechanisms to ensure targeted assistance and interventions, UNHCR launched in March 2009 a scheme to identify and partner with potential NNGOs working in places of return and displacement. The overall goals are twofold: 1) to enhance the performance and administrative capacity of selected NNGOs thus ensuring their sustainable contribution; while 2) enabling UNHCR to deliver urgent assistance at a targeted, grassroots level. By end of December 2009, a total of **76 national NGOs** (covering northern, central and southern Iraq) were selected to implement **88 small-scale projects** in returnee and IDP populated areas under the umbrella of three International NGOs.
- ⇒ UNHCR Iraq expanded its presence through increasing its staffing capacity by 50% in 2009. Whilst having 102 staff on board at end of 2008, the Iraq office ended 2009 having **148 staff appointed**. The Country Office in Baghdad increased its staffing capacity especially in the national category - 37 staff members, 30 national, 7 international. Total number of **UNHCR staff in 2010 will reach 213 people**. UNHCR field presence expanded to Diyala, Anbar (Ramadi, Trebil), Wassit, Salah al-Din, Missan, Ninewa governorates; Babel is underway.
- ⇒ In June 2009, UNHCR Iraq closed down a makeshift camp in No-Mans Land/Trebil on the Iraq-Jordan border where 181 Iranian Kurds were stranded since May 2005. It took much effort to convince the group to relocate to Al-Waleed camp on the Iraq-Syrian border where there are more appropriate facilities. A few weeks later, another group of refugees, 171 Iranian Arabs (Ahwazis), were also relocated from No-Man's Land to the camp. UNHCR is considering resettlement options for the three refugee groups here, Palestinian, Iranian Kurds and Ahwazis, with significant progress on the Palestinian level.
- ⇒ UNHCR Iraq made timely emergency interventions following security incidents in Ninewa, Kirkuk and Baghdad. Direct liaising between UNHCR field staff and local authorities helped in assisting districts and villages affected by the bomb blasts. By end of December 2009, UNHCR distributed **162 NFI kits** to affected people in **Ninewa** and **1,645 kits in Baghdad** following the incidents that took place in August, October and December respectively (200 in August and 590 in October and 855 in December). Emergency interventions, in terms of shelter rehabilitation, were completed in Ninewa where a total of **458 shelters were constructed** (62 in Mosul city center, 249 in Telefar, 84 in Wardak, 57 in Shrekhan and 6 Khazna). The Minister of Human Rights and the deputy minister of MoDM visited the locations of explosions in Khazna and Shrekhan and complimented the work done by UNHCR in Mosul. A further **170 houses were rehabilitated in Kirkuk and 74 shops in Shorja** market. The Mayor of Taza attended the opening ceremony of the market and praised such timely interventions. **In Salhiya/Baghdad 98 flats with minor repairs were rehabilitated following the October blasts and 100 units in Madain – Al Jamiya**, following the August blasts.
- ⇒ Re-registration / verification exercise commenced in November 2009 for all refugees and asylum seekers in Iraq following the introduction of ProGres. In Erbil, a new registration center was opened and operated by UNHCR and PAC staff trained on data entry. Upon finalization of the exercise in Erbil, the process was replicated in Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk thus covering the Kurdistan Region. Simultaneously, the exercise also started in Baghdad and Anbar (Al Waleed camp). By end December 2009 the verification of the Iranian Arabs (Ahwazi) refugees in southern Iraq was completed which is the first step towards identifying durable solutions for this group. The plan is to complete the whole verification exercise by June 2010.
- ⇒ Along with other UN agencies, UNHCR provided support to the Government-led Diyala initiative that stemmed from the Cabinet Order 54/S. UNHCR's main areas of responsibility are protection and rehabilitation of destroyed shelter. In 2009, the shelter plan included and completed 3,000 shelter units in Diyala including NFI/domestic items. A Protection Assistance Centre (PAC) provided legal advice and referral and a Return, Integration and Community Centre (RICC) was established to coordinate assistance and monitoring. Since the start of the project in September 2009, 90 villages have already been assessed. UNHCR's interventions also included the implementation of small multi-sector projects for the most vulnerable beneficiaries through the national Diyala-based NGOs.