

Monthly Highlights

November 2009

- UNHCR, on first of November, organised in Erbil a Strategic meeting with all partners Iraq wide. The meeting aimed at discussing 2009 “lessons learnt/recommendations” as well as a plan on “way forward” for 2010. New budget framework together with time lines for 2010 preparations were introduced to Partners with emphasis on internal controls. 78 participants attended the two day meeting - 43 Partners and 35 UNHCR staff.
- UNHCR main Office in Baghdad received a Donors’ Mission that composed of the US, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Australia. The mission lasted for three days as of 14 November. Accompanied by UNHCR Representative in Iraq, the Donors visited a returnee village in Diyala Governorate and a Registration center as well as a squatter camp in Baghdad. On the US side the mission was chaired by Mr. Eric Schwarz, Assistant Secretary of State for PRM and Ms. Samantha Power from the US NSC and the US President’s Coordinator for the Iraqi Displacement. One of the main outcome of this mission was to demonstrate to the Donors’ the challenges of working in Iraq. Donors were supportive of the efforts made by the UN agencies in the context of Diyala initiative.
- On 1 November, within 24 hours of the flash floods in the Kurdistan Region, UNHCR assessment teams were on the ground. The floods caused 2 deaths, scores of injuries and temporary displacement and damage to housing. NFIs were distributed to 157 families in Garatoo and Piran districts of Erbil governorate. UNHCR worked with the Erbil Governorate Emergency Cell - a UNHCR capacity-building project to coordinate the response.
- A delegation from the Turkish Consulate in Mosul visited UNHCR's recently established Returnee Integration Community Centre (RICC). The delegation observed the reception of returnees and was briefed on emergency response in Shrekan and Khazna. A discussion also took place on how the Government of Turkey could contribute to UNHCR's humanitarian work in Ninewa.
- Aluminium engineering and hairdressing vocational training courses began for 20 male and 20 female Turkish Kurd refugees in Makhmour Camp. The training is conducted by START, a new local NGO subcontracted through Qandil.
- Re-registration of 26,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Kurdistan Region commenced in Erbil. The registration procedure utilized the newly established proGres database. A new registration centre, operated by UNHCR protection staff and PAC data entry and reception clerks, processed some 250 cases in the first two weeks of its start. The operation will relocate to Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk in January and is expected to be completed in four months.
- UNHCR ended the month of November with a total of 81 direct and indirect partners on board. The partners comprise of 2 governmental partners, 11 international direct implementing partners, 17 national direct implementing partners and 51 National NGOs embedded under the umbrella of 3 major international partners (Intersos in the Centre, MRDS in the South and Mercy Corp in the North).
- On November 30 2009, the construction of a new Interagency Office Building was completed. The building includes offices for UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO in the UNAMI Diwan Compound, IZ – Baghdad. The official inauguration ceremony took place on 1 December in the presence of the SRSG, UNHCR Representative, Head of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), as well as the Minister of MoDM (Ministry of Migration and Displacement). Opening speeches acknowledged with thanks the role of both the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and MSB that resulted in this accomplishment. The two-storey building office is 1,000m². UNICEF and WHO, share 10 new offices, occupying the ground floor. UNHCR occupies the first floor with twelve offices and a conference room. The cost of the project (US\$ 1,560 000) was totally funded by the SIDA.

