



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian partners prepare for up to 85,000 displaced from Hawiga and surrounding areas.
- Iraq inter-agency toll-free call centre one of a kind in existence.
- Cash Working Group develops joint approach for assistance programmes.
- Iraq Humanitarian Fund prepares new allocation.

### FIGURES

# of people in need	11m
# of people targeted for assistance	6.2m
# of internally displaced persons (IDPs)	3.3m
# of IDPs who live outside camps	2.5m
# of affected ppl within host communities	3.2m
# of returnees	2.1m
# of Syrian refugees	0.23m

Source: 2017 Iraq HRP/HNO/IOM DTM

### Humanitarian Response Plan

### FUNDING

**985 million**  
requested for 2017 (US\$)

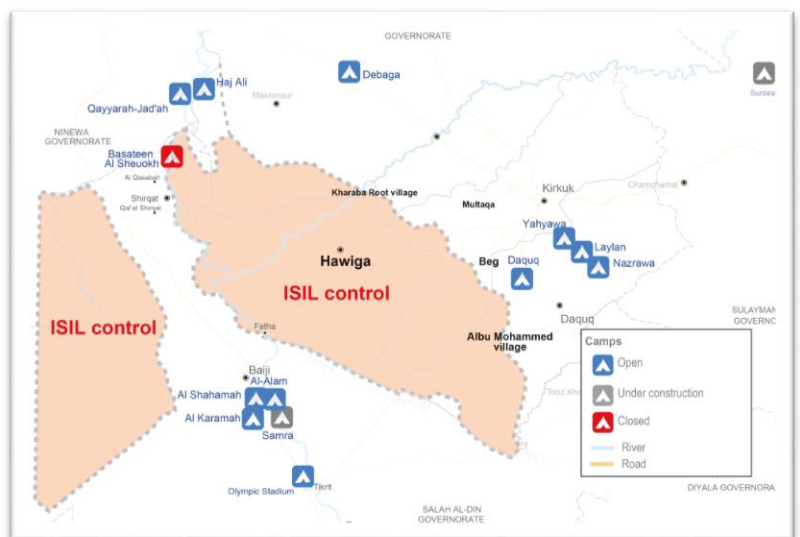
**56%**  
**(\$550 million)**  
(reflects funding on FTS as of 15 September 2017)  
Source: <http://fts.unocha.org>

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## Military operations in Hawiga may affect 85,000

Humanitarian partners prepare for the imminent military operations to retake Hawiga and eastern Shirqat, in Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorates, from control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). ISIL took control of the area in June 2014 and since August 2016 some 102,000 people fled. An estimated 85,000 people are at extreme risk and likely to be heavily affected in the coming weeks and months. In close coordination with the authorities, humanitarian organizations are working together to prepare for increasing numbers of people fleeing over the course of the upcoming operation. Camp preparations are underway in the area.



Basic assistance will be provided to IDPs at the mustering points around the perimeter of where military operations will take place. Close coordination and cooperation between humanitarian organizations and the authorities will remain crucial. More comprehensive humanitarian assistance will be provided by cluster members at screening and transit sites where they are granted access. Supplies are currently being prepositioned at identified screening and transit sites where people will receive water, access to sanitation facilities and household items, food, protection screening and healthcare assistance.

Unofficial reports from Hawiga and the surrounding ISIL-controlled areas indicate people have experienced extreme hardship and suffering since June 2014, when ISIL took over. Food is scarce, as is medicine and healthcare. Fighting is likely to be fierce and as previously experienced, ISIL is likely to use civilians as human shields. Escape from Hawiga is expected to be a life-threatening undertaking for all who attempt it, with danger in the form of explosive hazards as well as direct and indirect fire. As is common in these scenarios, the most vulnerable will be at the greatest risk: pregnant women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and separated and unaccompanied minors.

## Barriers to returns

Millions of displaced Iraqis live in camps and host communities as a result of conflict. Returns are slow and hindered by insecure environments and unavailable services. Many areas have yet to be cleared of unexploded ordnances (UXOs). Physical infrastructure, markets and livelihoods are severely damaged and destroyed in some places. This can make returns hazardous and present obstacles to attaining durable solutions to end displacement for people. At the same time, camp life is not a long-term solution. According to figures provided by Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement, more than 280,000 people displaced in Ninewa left the camps to return home. An estimated 700,000 remain displaced, 349,800 of whom live in camps created for the Mosul response.

In order to support IDPs and understand the factors that contribute to people's decision to stay or to return home, an intentions survey is underway in the Ninewa camps. A randomly



Credit: OCHA/David White

selected sample of IDP households (approximately 4,721 households, or 8 per cent of the total in camps) were asked questions about their timeline for returning home; their concerns and expectations; what they need in order to be able to do so; and what their level of knowledge about the situation at home. Interviewed householders were informed that the analysis of these questions will support planning and the design of future assistance programmes to better ensure returns are voluntary, dignified and sustainable.

The intentions survey is useful for humanitarian actors for several reasons. First, it helps identify what people want to do, and the factors that inhibit or support their ability to follow through. Once assimilated, this data can assist humanitarian organizations and the authorities to work together to address root causes and identify durable solutions for IDPs. The findings from the survey will be launched next week.

## Toll-free call centre provides vital information

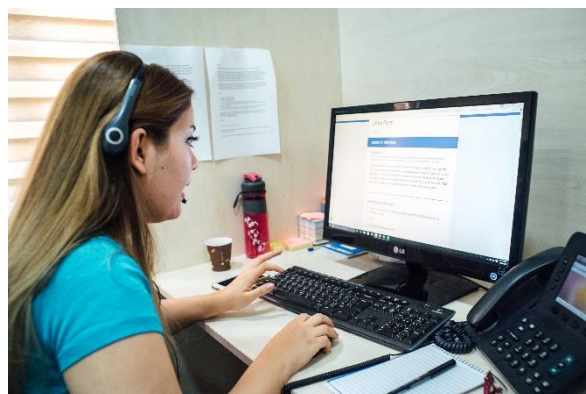
For conflict-affected people in Iraq, access to accurate and timely information is a basic yet essential need. Indeed, some believe it is a life-saving tool, necessary in all humanitarian crises. Based in Erbil, the Iraq Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Information Centre is currently the only global inter-agency toll-free call centre of its kind in existence. Staff who work there are prepared to answer a range of commonly-asked questions on everything from how to register for cash assistance, to calls about gender-based violence, child protection, mental health support services, to allegations of fraud and corruption.

The Centre deals with queries from people separated from their families as they fled their homes. Other queries involve people who require proof of identity to enable them to receive humanitarian assistance because their papers were lost.

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*Staff are trained to assess the vulnerability of callers and flag extreme cases to partner agencies for verification and possible inclusion in assistance programs.*

In addition to answering questions and linking callers to more specialized agencies and services, staff are trained to assess the vulnerability of callers and flag extreme cases to partner agencies for verification and possible inclusion in assistance programmes. While the Centre does not verify information provided by callers, or conduct in person assessments, the types of calls received are documented and can point to problem areas that require follow-up by the appropriate agency. The positive impact of the Centre is tangible. In April 2017, multiple calls were received regarding forced relocations. This information was shared, and prevented an additional 11,000 people from forced relocation.



Credit: UNOPS

The call centre receives funding from international institutions such as ECHO as well as interagency funds, and employs 13 staff, six of whom are women.

## Shared tools cut cash distribution time in half

Cash assistance programmes are designed to help vulnerable people who can access economically healthy markets meet basic needs like food, shelter and healthcare. The Cash Assistance Working Group in Iraq made notable strides in developing a nuanced yet standardized interagency approach to cash assistance programming. It is not always possible to use cash as a form of assistance, especially if markets are not functioning well. Flooding the market with cash when items are in short supply can rapidly increase inflation and cause more harm than good.

The Cash Working Group identified best practices with the wider humanitarian community. One of the positive findings of their research was that a common interagency approach using shared tools can cut the time to provide vulnerable people with cash by half in complex emergency settings. Interventions in East and West Mosul are a good example of this. Before the new approach existed, it took beneficiaries in East Mosul a minimum of six weeks to receive cash assistance. By the time organizations were able to safely access West Mosul, a common approach and tools were developed. This time, beneficiaries in West Mosul received assistance just three weeks after humanitarian organizations had safe access. The joint intervention increased response time by an impressive 50 per cent. Using shared assessment and post distribution monitoring tools also makes it easier to monitor the effectiveness of programmes. NGOs contributed significantly to the development of the tools used to assess markets and household vulnerability levels.

As with any humanitarian programme, cash assistance must be tailored to the local context to succeed. Iraq has strong, pre-existing social protection mechanisms in place. This means that cash interventions in Iraq do not last as long as in other countries. In Iraq, cash interventions are designed to fill a three-month gap while the most vulnerable are identified and formally integrated into government programmes. Iraqis are often accustomed to receiving uniform entitlements for all affected people. As humanitarian support is finite, it was necessary to carefully explain how targeting works, and why it is necessary.

When cash is a viable option, it is often one of the best ways to support vulnerable people. Beneficiaries receive cash transfers over their mobile phones, which they use at a local shop participating in the programme to withdraw cash. This means of transfer - 'mobile money' - also makes it possible to track and verify that the intended person received the cash. This approach, piloted last autumn, is the first time mobile money was used in Iraq.

## IHF prepares new allocation

In anticipation of military operations in Hawiga, the Iraq Humanitarian Fund (IHF), with support from the clusters, is preparing a new allocation. The Fund will help partners scale up their emergency operations in response to an expected new surge in displacement.

Meanwhile, the IHF team has stepped up its targeted monitoring and evaluation efforts on earlier projects. Monitoring activities range from consultations with partners to field visits, focus group interviews, financial spot checks and third-party monitoring in remote and high-risk areas. Partners whose projects are monitored receive recommendations on project implementation, inter-agency coordination and future programming.

## Projects close due to underfunding

Humanitarian funding for Iraq remains low. The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is only 56 per cent funded as of 15 September leaving a shortfall of US\$435 million. Additional funding is urgently needed to prevent further cutbacks in life-saving programmes.

Of the 334 projects in the HRP, 152 did not start or closed due to lack of funding. An additional 109 projects are also at risk of closure or severe reduction. The worst-hit clusters are food security and education. The table below demonstrates the current status of programmes: projects in red have received no funding or have closed; those in yellow are at risk of closure; and projects in green are nearly or entirely funded.



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