

Syrian Refugee Response in Iraq

Winter Preparedness Factsheet

October 2013

Background

Since the start of the internal conflict last year, thousands of Syrian nationals have flooded into neighbouring Iraq in search of safety from the violence. So far, UNHCR has registered more than 197,000 registered Syrian refugees are currently in Iraq, primarily in the northern Kurdistan region, including those who arrived in northern Iraq following start of the new influx in 15 August 2013. Less than half of population are in camps while the rest are accommodated outside camps.

In line with its global mandate, UNHCR is coordinating the overall emergency response to protect and assist Syrian refugees across Iraq, in addition to carrying out regular monitoring along the border.

Now, with the onset of winter, focus is especially on helping Syrian refugees cope with the harsh weather conditions in Iraq. Many refugees crossing the border arrive with little or no belongings, further highlighting the importance of winter preparedness to ensure that men, women and children both in and outside camps are safe through the winter.

UNHCR, together with government authorities both in Baghdad and the Kurdistan region, partners, UN agencies and I/NGOs, is working to consolidate their efforts towards winter preparedness among both the camp and non-camp populations. Under this approach, UNHCR plans to cover all Syrian refugees accommodated in the camps and transit locations and most vulnerable Syrian refugee families living outside the camps.



A Syrian refugee family living makeshift accommodation © UNHCR/ B. Farrell

Target Beneficiaries

In addition to Al Obaidi and Domiz camps, which was set up last year to accommodate the initial wave of Syrians into Iraq, some of those who fled into the Kurdistan region after 15 August 2013 are currently hosted in five camps and the same number of transit locations, primarily in the Erbil governorate. However as part of the winter preparedness efforts, government authorities both in Baghdad and the Kurdistan region are now focusing on relocating those accommodated in transit locations to the permanent camps. Therefore winter preparedness will focus on covering 100% of the population accommodated in six permanent camps i.e. Al-Obaidi, Domiz, Darashakran, Kawergosk, Qushtapa, Gawilan and Basirma. In addition, if needed winter preparedness will also extend to refugees in transit camps.



Kawergosk camp © UNHCR/ S. Perera

For those living outside camps, assistance for winter preparedness will target identified vulnerable families across the three governorates. UNHCR estimates that 40% of the overall non-camp population is vulnerable and will be targeted through winter preparedness process.

Targeted Population

Although the current Syrian refugee population is more than 197,000, UNHCR along with the government and other actors involved in winter preparedness are preparing to respond to up to 350,000 persons in Iraq under its winter preparedness process.

Overall figures – per region

Category	Kurdistan Region	Al-Qa'im (Anbar)	Baghdad, Central, South	Total
Non-Camp Population	120,000	12,000	N/A	132,000
Camp Population	180,000	18,000	20,000	218,000
Total refugee population	300,000	30,000	20,000	350,000

Winter Preparedness Planning figures

Category	Total operational planning figure (persons)	Total operational planning figure (households)	Coverage under winterization package (households)
Non-camp Population	210,000	35,000	*14,000 (families with vulnerabilities)
Camp Population	140,000	23,000	23,000
Total	350,00	58,000	37,000

*40% of the overall non-camp population is estimated to be vulnerable

Winterization Working Group Members



Winter Preparedness Activities

Core Relief Items (CRIs): Each refugee family will receive the following items under UNHCR's winterization package. Some items such as water jerry cans, mattresses and stoves are provided under the regular CRI kit to new arrivals. The distribution of the additional items under the winterization package is expected to begin mid to late November 2013. In the instance that the border reopens, new arrivals will be provided with the regular CRI kit as well as an additional winter preparedness package.

Items	Camp	Non Camp	
	Per family	Family size 1 ≤ 3	Family size ≥ 4
Plastic Sheet	2	1	1
Water Jerry Can	1	*	*
Kerosene Jerry Can	1	1	1
Quilts	6	1	2
Thermal Blanket (medium)	3	1	2
Kerosene	400 litres	400 litres	400 litres
Mattresses	*	1	2
Stove	*	1	1

*Already distributed under regular CRI kit for new arrivals

Kerosene for heating: UNHCR will provide Syrian refugees in camps and vulnerable families outside camps in Dohuk and Sullemniyah governorates with 200 litres of kerosene for heating purposes. Each respective local governorate has also agreed to provide an additional 200 litres of kerosene. Thus each of the families in Dohuk and Sulemaniyah Governorates will receive up to 400 litres of kerosene to help keep them warm through the winter. UNHCR is currently negotiations with the local government officials in the Erbil to do the same for families in the Governorate.

Fire Prevention: The use of kerosene heaters and other flammable heating/ cooking devices increases the risk of fires spreading throughout the camps. In response, UNHCR through partners plans to place perforated buckets filled with sand to be utilized in camps, while overall the Government will be responsible for long-term fire prevention. In addition, awareness raising sessions on fire prevention and training of "fire marshals" also could take place within the camps. If a fire should occur, the fire marshals will be the focal points for response.

Warm Clothes & shoes: UNICEF and Save the Children (ages 6-17) have committed to providing children under the age of 17 with warm clothes and shoes. In addition, DRC is procuring winter clothes and shoes for adults in Qushtapa camp. However, the lack of winter clothing for adults remains a major concern in other camps and UNHCR is urging the international community for additional funding to cover this need.

Mass Information: UNHCR is coordinating with all agencies to ensure that joint messages are disseminated to the Syrian refugee population regarding winter preparedness, including the description and number of items provided to families, specific distribution dates, fire prevention etc.



UNHCR mass information teams in Kawergosk Camp ©
UNHCR/ J. Seregni

Shelter/ Infrastructure

1) Site Planning and construction of drainage in camps

The construction of the primary drainage is linked with site planning for each of the permanent camps. The completion of storm water drainage is particularly important during the upcoming rains and the winter period, to avoid camps from being flooded. There also needs to be adequate maintenance in place and, e.g. frequent erosion control of the roads, ditches and adjacent land. Site planning is complete for most of the camps and is underway through UNHCR's partners for the remaining locations. In addition, the relevant agencies together with the Government is working together to complete the construction of adequate drainage for these locations.

In addition, UNHCR will replace tents that maybe damaged/ destroyed due to various reasons. So far, assessments have shown that more than 4,300 tents in camps located in Kurdistan region may need to be replaced. UNHCR is dispatching tents from its stockpile in Erbil as replacements.

2) Construction of concrete foundations for shelters

In Darashakran and a portion of Domiz, concrete foundations have been constructed along with a 60cm wall, upon which each individual tent is set up. The focus now is extending the same model for the remaining permanent camps.

However if the concrete foundations cannot be completed, plastic sheeting could be utilized as additional flooring to prevent dampness and moisture penetrating from beneath, as well as other accommodation options for the refugee families. However limited funding available for these bases is a major concern, and UNHCR is appealing to the international community for financial support. In addition UNHCR and DRC are looking at the possibility of using thermal enhancement for tents in the camps. This involves an additional layer within the tents to protect those accommodated from the elements.

For the non-camp population INGO partners such as Mercy Corps are planning to distribute shelter rehabilitation kits in the Suleimaniyah and Erbil governorates.

Total number of cement bases - per camp

Governorate	Households (Estimate)	Camp Name	Planned number of cement bases
Erbil	3,924	Darashakran	1,960 (complete)
		Kawergosk	1,044
		Qushtapa	873
		Basirma	404
Dohuk	9,121	Domiz	2,696 (1,986 complete)
		Gawilan	1,000
Sulemaniyah	374	Arbat	2,048
TOTAL	13,793		10,025



Construction of wall on the cement base © UNHCR/ S. Perera

Planning for winter preparedness is also underway in other sectors such as **water and sanitation** and **education**.

UNHCR has thus far chaired seven meetings of the Winterization Working Group since the start of September 2013, with the participation of ERC, UNICEF, Save the Children, UNAMI, DRC, IRC, ACTED, WHO, Mercy Corps, Triangle, The Barzani Charity Foundation, IOM, NRC, ACF, Qatar Red Crescent and Intersos.

Minutes of the meetings are available on the Iraq country page of the Syrian Refugee Response – Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=103>

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