IRAQ

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE – SYRIAN REFUGEES IN IRAQ

16-31 May 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

In the reporting period:

- 363 Syrians entered the KR-I via the Peshkabour crossing point and were transferred to Gawilan camp for registration and assistance. The overwhelming majority of new-arrivals were large families of Kurdish ethnicity, who have been displaced from Aleppo sub-districts such as Tel-Hasil, Tel-Arn and Kobane.

- A total of 754 Syrians returned from KR-I to Syria, bringing the total number of spontaneous returnees to 7,059 since the beginning of the year. The majority of returnees reported their intention to return to Qamishli, Al Malkeyia and Al Hasakah as their final destination.

- Refugees in urban locations are requesting to move to camps in Erbil and Duhok Governorates, due to financial difficulties driven by increases in the cost of living, limited employment prospects and high rents.

- UNHCR through the Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organisation (ISHO) commenced summerisation distributions in Al Obaidy camp. Rechargeable fans and plastic sheeting were distributed to 170 families in the camp.

Syrian refugees waiting to be registered at the UNHCR registration office in Gawilan camp in Duhok governorate after being transported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) from the Peshkhabour crossing point. (UNHCR/ R. Rasheed).
UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

During the reporting period ongoing tensions between Baghdad and Erbil on budgetary and oil disputes continued; with both Iraqi and Peshmerga forces engaged in the fight against ISIS in central and northern Iraq.

In Kirkuk and across Mosul’s frontiers clashes continued as ISIS militants waged a number of attacks in Sinjar in the Ninewa Governorate and at Mosul Dam. Attacks were repelled by Peshmerga forces and supported by coalition air strikes. Iraqi security forces also made advances towards the Baiji oil refinery, taken over by ISIS militants and located on the approach from Mosul to Baghdad in Salahadin Governorate.

Small scale clashes also erupted between the military wing of The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) on the Iraq-Iran border area of Kelashin, in Erbil Governorate. The greater Kelashin area borders both Iran and Turkey, and is a site of confrontation between the two groups.

The humanitarian situation across the country continues to be further stretched by new waves of displacement with IDPs arriving from Salahdin and Anbar Governorates to Baghdad and to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). IDPs entering the KR-I are continuing to arrive by air from Baghdad to Erbil and Suleimaniyah.

Across the KR-I, the economic situation remains afflicted by the precarious security situation, the unresolved budgetary dispute and the new wave of IDPs from Ramadi seeking refuge in the north. Salaries for civil servants in many KR-I institutions remain unpaid for the previous two months.

Achievements

Protection

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- 363 Syrians entered the KR-I from the Peshkabour crossing point. The overwhelming majority of new-arrivals were of Kurdish ethnicity who were displaced from Aleppo sub-districts such as Tel-Hasil, Tel-Arn and Kobane.

- In coordination with Peshkabour border officials, a total of 32 registered unaccompanied minors (28 boys and 4 girls) were successfully reunited with their families in Syria via the Semalka border point.

- In all four Erbil Governorate camps, the residency departments continued to issue individual documentation to eligible refugees, with a total of 1,603 residency cards processed in the second half of May. Residency cards have a one year validity, which facilitates access to employment and key social services such as health and education.

- A Qandil legal team from the Protection Assistance and Reintegration Center (PARC) also provided legal consultations to 51 camp-based refugees in Erbil Governorate on personal affairs, birth registration, SGBV and labour and civil laws; and facilitated the issuance of 79 legal documents, including birth and marriage certificates. The majority of refugees who had approached the legal team for counselling are women.

- An Iris verification exercise in Domiz 1 camp has been completed.

- In Duhok Governorate a total of 98 Syrian refugees were approved for cash assistance and 187 cases were approved for school transportation cash assistance

- In Suleimaniyah Governorate, 55 asylum seeker certificates, including renewals, were issued, 28 cases were referred to PARC and 431 Syrians received consultation and guidance related to registration and residency.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- 754 Syrians returned from the KR-I to Syria. The individuals were counselled at the Bajet Kandala Registration Centre to ensure the voluntary nature of their return. These new returns bring the total number of spontaneous returnees to 7,059 individuals since the beginning of 2015. The majority of returnees are returning to non-conflict zones
controlled by Kurdish forces, including Qamishly, Al Malkeyia and Al Hasakah. Various reasons for return have been provided, including family reunification, the high cost of living and lack of job opportunities in the KR-I, or the need to return to attend family events or for medical treatment.

- Community services, in collaboration with INTERSOS, have conducted a survey on birth registration in all Erbil governorate refugee camps, targeting 542 families who have children that have not been registered. Preliminary findings are that a lack of knowledge regarding KR-I registration procedures and transportation issues in reaching Erbil for registration are the main reasons why births are not being registered.

**NON-CAMP**

**Achievements and Impact**

- In Erbil Governorate, 254 newly registered families (580 individuals) were provided by UNHCR with asylum seeker certificates through the PARC centre. A PARC legal team also facilitated the issuance of 77 documents, including birth, marriage and death certificates; and the Residency Department in Erbil issued 1,496 residency cards and 528 residency cards were renewed.

- UNHCR undertook a monitoring visit to the Women’s Listening Centre (WLC) in Gawilan camp and provided guidance on seven complex SGBV cases.

- UNICEF’s partner, the Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs (DoLSA), provided wheel chairs to six refugee children.

- In Suleimaniyah city, 60 cases (101) individuals were registered at PARC. 288 asylum seeker certificates, including renewals, were issued, 61 cases were referred to PARC, 72 cases were transferred from Erbil and Duhok, and 1,190 cases were referred to the Residency Department for the issuance or renewal of residency permits. In addition, 1658 individuals received consultation and guidance related to registration and residency.

- UNHCR mobile registration teams and the Residency Department visited Rania district in Suleimaniyah Governorate where four cases (seven individuals) were registered, 115 cases (504 individuals) were verified and 377 individuals were iris scanned. 114 individuals were also issued with residency permits.

- Through UNHCR, a Civil Development Organisation (CDO) legal team represented 123 Syrians in Suleimaniyah Governorate on matters relating to documentation, civil status, marriage and birth certificates, and labour disputes. The team also provided legal consultations for 226 cases.

- In Sulaymaniyah Governorate, UNICEF’s partner, DoLSA provided small income generation projects to five foster care families that are hosting five extremely vulnerable cases of separated children.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- In Erbil Governorate, Syrian refugees face delays in receiving residency cards. A large number of Syrian refugees are awaiting interviews with the Asayish, a mandatory component of the renewal process.

- A significant number of refugees in Erbil and Duhok Governorates have requested to move to camps due to financial difficulties driven by increases in the cost of living, limited employment prospects and high rents. 355 families in Erbil Governorate wishing to move to camps have been referred to PARC and Qandil. In Duhok Governorate ten cases per week are moving from urban areas to Gawilan camp. Refugee protection monitoring visits in Rania district in Suleimaniyah Governorate are indicating that approximately 98 per cent of new arrivals to the area have relocated from Erbil and Dohuk due to high living costs or for family reunification reasons.

- A number of Kurdish Syrians have no formal proof of identity which is impeding their obtaining of a residency card. According to PARC, there are currently 83,111 Syrian individuals with UNHCR Asylum Seeker Certificates in Erbil, but only 9,000 Syrian individuals hold residency cards. The lack of residency cards hinders the freedom of movement and access to education and other basic public services.

**Durable Solutions**

**Achievements and Impact**

- Resettlement pre-assessment screening was undertaken for 29 cases, 26 of which were prioritized. The main referral profile was linked cases (26) followed by women at risk and refugees with family links in resettlement countries.
Interviews were carried out in all three KR-I Governorates. Identification interviews were conducted in 36 cases, whilst 34 cases were reviewed, of which 13 were prioritized and 21 deprioritized. The teams also undertook 13 RSD/RST interviews.

Eleven cases (52 individuals) were referred to the MENA Regional Hub in Amman for submission for resettlement. The MENA Regional Hub submitted 10 cases (47 individuals) for resettlement to the USA and 10 cases (48 individuals) to Sweden. Ten cases (44 individuals) were accepted by Sweden for resettlement and two cases (ten individuals) were accepted by the UK. Five cases (17 individuals) departed to Sweden and the UK.

Focus group discussions were conducted with Kobane refugees in Erbil Governorate, in both camp and non-camp settings. 149 camp refugees and 109 non-camp refugees participated with findings indicating that most did not want to return to Kobane for the time being in light of the security situation and difficult living conditions.

Education

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and UNESCO are rehabilitating a secondary school at the Kawargosk camp.
- UNICEF commenced construction of a new school in Gawilan camp, where 403 children aged between 6 – 12 years are out of school.
- To increase awareness of the importance of school attendance, UNICEF with its partner, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), held two Mother Support Group meetings in Qushtapa and Basirma camps. NRC’s Education Outreach Workers also conducted 225 tents visits to follow up on students who have been failing to attend class in Erbil Governorate camp schools.
- In Domiz I and II camps, UNICEF through its implementing partner War Child UK is facilitating regular recreational activities for 2,079 boys and 1,936 girls.
- Syrian refugee teachers who went on a one-day strike in schools in KR-I refugee camps, due to an issue over unpaid salaries and contract non-renewals, resumed teaching.
- Annual final examinations from grade one to eight were completed in all refugee camp schools.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The issue of payments for teacher salaries is only temporarily resolved owing to budgetary challenges faced by the Ministry of Education.

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF is constructing two new prefabricated schools in the Qirga and Chiwar districts of Suleimaniyah Governorate to accommodate refugees in host communities.
- 138 refugee students in the Bardaqrismahan school in Suleimaniyah received clothes through UNICEF’s support.

Health

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- A total of 27,355 consultations were conducted in Primary Health Care (PHC) centres across Syrian refugee camps during May. The utilisation rate was 3.8 consultations per person per year, in line with the expected range of 1-4 consultations. The main reasons for consultations were upper and lower respiratory tract infections, skin infections and urinary tract infections. 1,084 patients were referred to secondary and tertiary hospitals for further investigations and/or hospitalization. A total of 1,297 patients benefitted from mental health services in May.
UNICEF and its implementing partners provided psychosocial services to a total of 289 newly registered refugee children across KR-I refugee camps. Cases included children with psychosocial distress and disorders, non-attendance at school, child labour and domestic violence.

UNICEF and its implementing partners registered 917 new children in psychosocial support services in UNICEF’s Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) across KR-I refugee camps.

Action plans implemented jointly by health, WASH and camp management partners to reduce scabies have significantly reduced the number of cases in all camps. Only two camps reported new cases in the month of May.

UNFPA’s partner Al Masella conducted awareness raising sessions on reproductive health, medical services for women, risks related to teenage pregnancies and GBV mitigation measures for 515 women and girls in five camps in Erbil and Suleimaniyah Governorates.

Trained Syrian refugee nurses visited 2,400 families in their tents across KR-I refugee camps as part of the UNICEF-supported new born home visit program. A total of 334 new born babies received health support services.

UNICEF continued to support local and governmental health authorities for routine immunization of encamped Syrian refugees. A total of 839 children under five years old (U5) were immunized against polio, 205 infants under one year of age were vaccinated against measles, 200 U5 children received the MMR vaccine, and 236 U5 children received vitamin A supplements.

In all KR-I camps, an estimated 1,200 U5 children accessed UNICEF-supported growth monitoring and baby hut services. Information-sharing and counselling on maternal and child health continued with 90 seminars held in refugee camps reaching an estimated 500 pregnant and lactating women with information on infant and child feeding and nutrition.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- Lice infestation remains an issue facing refugee children in Erbil Governorate camps with PHCs receiving patients on a daily basis. PHCs continue to sensitize refugees, treat incidents and monitor the situation.

**NON-CAMP**

**Achievements and Impact**

In Dohuk Governorate, PU-AMI is continuing to enhance health awareness among refugees and service uptake in urban health facilities. 49 urban PHCs have been provided with furniture, 53 Community Health Volunteers are being trained and awareness sessions are being implemented in public spaces (schools, parks etc...) in 43 areas of the Governorate to improve knowledge of health issues. Five teams composed of a nurse and outreach worker are undertaking home visits, with 1,400 individuals reached so far.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- Access to mental health care and psychosocial support services remains limited for non-camp refugees and needs to be further expanded.
- Information gaps on service availability and referral pathways hinder non-camp refugees’ opportunities to access assistance and social services.
- Drug shortages remain a key concern in public health facilities.

**Food Security and Nutrition**

**CAMP**

**Achievements and Impact**

- WFP, in partnership with INTERSOS, ACTED and Islamic Relief Worldwide – Iraq, completed all remaining distributions across all Syrian refugee camps in the KR-I where almost 90 per cent of beneficiaries are reached with vouchers. Through the voucher programme, WFP injected USD 1.7 million into the local economy in May alone.
- The joint UNHCR/WFP targeting process continued with the commencement of a tent-to-tent assessment. WFP and its partner, the REACH Initiative will administer 20,000 questionnaires to households in KR-I refugee camps by mid-June with the results of this assessment enabling a better understanding of the food security situation.
In Al Obaidy Camp, UNHCR through the Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organisation (ISHO) continued to distribute two pieces of bread per refugee per day for the entire camp population in addition to complementary food assistance of IQD 17,500 to 750 refugees in the camp. To address the gap in delivery of food parcels, UNHCR through ISHO distributed an additional amount of IQD 25,000 for 861 refugees.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- WFP was unable to deliver food commodities to Al Obaidy camp in Anbar Governorate, where ongoing military operations are hindering access to the camp. WFP is closely monitoring with UNHCR and Islamic Relief Worldwide with the aim of resuming deliveries in June.

### Water and Sanitation

**CAMP**

**Achievements and Impact**

- UNICEF and partners provided safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene promotion to Syrian refugees in KR-I camps and in Al Obaidy camp in Anbar Governorate, reaching an estimated 94,000 refugees throughout the reporting period.

- UNICEF’s partner Relief International (RI) has established and trained a WASH committee in Darashakran Camp to operate and maintain the WASH networks. Similar committees will be established in Qushtapa, Basirma and Kawergosk camp with the support of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

- In Qushtapa camp, UNICEF and the Directorate of Surrounding Water in Erbil installed control valves in the water network to control pressure and facilitate the equitable distribution of water in the system.

- Through UNICEF’s support, 49 hygiene promotion sessions in KR-I camps targeting 380 children were conducted, complemented by the distribution of soap and tissues. Additionally, 2,200 refugee households were visited, reaching an estimated 9,900 refugees, to decrease the incidence and risk of lice in the community.

- In Kawergosk camp, KURDS has repaired manholes of grey water in the permanent site. NRC has also relocated one water stand that blocked the road at the camp.

- In Basirma Camp, defects affecting the sewerage network for 240 plots in the camp have been repaired by ACF.

- Water trucking was discontinued in the Arbat Refugee Camp, following the connection of five pumps to reservoirs. The Directorate of Surrounding Water and THW are stabilizing water pressure to ensure the flow is constant.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- In light of the shortage of hygiene kits in Gawilan camp, a hygiene assessment conducted by PU-AMI indicated that soap, shampoo, bleach and detergent are needed.

- A fumigation campaign against mosquitoes and rodents is needed in Akre camp.

- Water loss due to overflowing storage tanks without floating control valves in camps remains a pending issue.

- In areas where there is no adequate pressure in the existing network, UNICEF is continuously distributing drinking water by tanker trucks.

- The high frequency of dislodging due to high volume of grey and black water connected to the same holdings tanks are still a problem in Rizgari Area of Domiz Camp.

### Shelter and NFIs

**CAMP**

**Achievements and Impact**

- UNHCR through the Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organisation (ISHO) commenced summerisation distributions in Al Obaidy camp. Rechargeable fans and plastic sheeting were distributed to 170 families in the camp.

- In Basirma camp, the Barzani Charity Foundation distributed baby diapers for 2015 born infants.
Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- Livelihood meetings took place in all Erbil governorate refugee camps with the relevant agencies to map their activities in order to mitigate duplication of services and beneficiaries. DRC has resultantly been nominated as the sector focal point to lead the livelihood project and create a database to include all livelihood projects previously undertaken to avoid a duplication of beneficiaries for upcoming projects.

Working in partnership

- Due to low funding levels for the 3RPs, the Inter Sector Working Group is prioritizing activities for implementation during the second semester of 2015. Inputs have been provided for a 3RP progress report which will be published before Ramadan.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Persevering for the family

Zakho City, Dohuk Governorate (UNHCR) – Although Miskeen Ahmed is just 18 years old, he is used to having support his family, growing up in a large household in Damascus. “I started making money when I was just 11, taking care of myself,” says Miskeen proudly.

Born in Qamishili as one of six siblings, Miskeen worked at a grocery store back in Syria but the onset of conflict in his homeland affected daily life. “I had to pass through many check points on my way to work, hearing gun shots. One day a mortar fell very close to the grocery store,” he says.

Seeking refuge in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), Miskeen and his family arrived in Zakho City in Duhok Governorate. With his determined spirit, Miskeen immediately found a job at a local restaurant. With a heavy responsibility in helping to provide for his family, Miskeen found a relatively better paid job at a bakery where he is now a cherished member of the team. “He has become like a brother to us. I trust him immensely,” says bakery manager Bewar Rasheed.

Whilst the largest portion of his earnings going towards rent for the apartment that he shares with his family, the remainder is spent on basic needs. Although money is tight, Miskeen perseveres for his family. With his family registered with UNHCR as asylum seekers they are also assisted with monthly food rations and they receive some support from humanitarian agencies.

Life in exile brings with it nostalgia of the previous life back home. Not only does Miskeen miss his friends, many of whom also had to flee, but he dreams of returning to school. “My wish is to study mathematics and English, but in this situation, it is nearly impossible.”

By Husam Eldin Mustafa
DONOR INFORMATION
Agencies are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operation.

Donors who have contributed to the operation:

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AOG  Armed opposition group
ANC  Antenatal care
BIA/BID  Best Interests Assessment/Best Interests Determination
CRI  Core Relief Items (formerly known as non-food items/NFIs)
DoE  Department of Education
DoH  Department of Health
KR-I  Kurdistan Region of Iraq
IDP  Internally displaced people
KR-I  Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MoDM  Ministry of Migration and Displacement
PARC  Protection Assistance Reintegration Centre
PHC  Primary Health Care
RSD  Refugee status determination
SGBV  Sexual and gender-based violence
UASC  Unaccompanied and separated children
WASH  Water, sanitation and hygiene
ANNEXES

Refugees by Areas of Origin in Syria

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Links:
For information on the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) please click on http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/.
Announcements of all sector meetings along with respective agendas and minutes, and other information on sector-wide progress such as 3Ws, dashboards and camp profiles, are available on the inter-agency information sharing portal at http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php.
For more information on the work of UNHCR and our partners in Iraq, please follow us on Twitter at @unhcriraq and on Facebook at “UNHCRinIraq”
UNHCR Registration Trends for Syrian Persons of Concern

**Registration Trend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration Unit</th>
<th>Total Persons of Concern</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>249,266</td>
<td>87,144</td>
<td>162,122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age and Gender Breakdown**

- **9-14 Years**: Male 72.8%, Female 73.1%
- **15-29 Years**: Male 62.1%, Female 66.1%
- **30-49 Years**: Male 58.7%, Female 61.9%
- **50-69 Years**: Male 56.7%, Female 62.4%
- **60+ Years**: Male 58.7%, Female 61.9%

- Minor & Children: 45.9%
- Male & Adults: 54.1%

**Place of Origin**

- Damascus 25.63%
- Aleppo 13.77%
- Homs 12.2%
- Others 1.53%

- Women: 27.6%
- Men: 72.4%
- Children: 31.5%

- Camp and non-camp population comparison: 63.44% in Camps

**Governorate**

- Damascus: 40.14%
- Deir Ezzor: 44.65%
- Lattakia: 12.65%
- Homs: 1.83%
- Tartous: 0.32%
- Akhtarin: 0.21%
- Dair Al-Zour: 0.06%
- Others: 0.18%

**Total Registration**

- 249,266 individuals; 87,144 households; 162,122 persons of concern

**Camp Registered Population**

- Camp: 1,619; Household: 2,074
- Overall: 1,996
- Total: 17,999

- Damascus: 1,619; Homs: 2,074
- Total: 17,999

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