

Highlights

- Returns to Sinjar and Al-Baaj
- Increase in COVID-19 cases
- Prime Minister visits IDP camp in Ninewa
- Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. meets with Governor of Anbar
- Iraq participates in conference on displacement

Return of Displaced People to Sinjar and Al-Baaj

From 8 June, large numbers of displaced Iraqis began returning to their areas of origin around north-western Ninewa Governorate, mostly to Sinjar District as well as to Al-Baaj District. Motivated by reports of improved security, clearance of explosive ordnance and the rehabilitation of public infrastructure, a total of 5,113 individuals had returned by 30 June. Some also said that COVID-19 movement restrictions, which hampered one or more family member's ability to travel back to the districts for livelihoods purposes, were a reason for their families returning to the area.

Among those returning, more than 80 per cent were arriving from Duhok Governorate, along with 19 per cent from within Ninewa and less than 1 per cent from Erbil. More than two thirds arrived directly from camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) with the remainder arriving from non-camp displacement settings. Partners including the International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix reported that not all of those attempting to return had been successful in returning to their location of origin; while two thirds of the arrivals were able to return to their homes successfully, one third became newly displaced on arrival, often because of inadequate, damaged or destroyed housing. Some IDPs have sheltered in damaged houses, have occupied vacant ones, or are staying with hosts.

Other challenges for returnees included debris removal and unexploded ordnance, given the large-scale destruction witnessed in Sinjar. There were also significant challenges for returnees and the re-displaced arriving in the area, with limited basic services such as health care, markets, water and electricity.

Access was a challenge for returnees and NGOs alike at some of the checkpoints used en route. The Duhok-Mosul-Sinjar route involved 17 checkpoints which affected hundreds of families and caused significant delays. The Mosul dam route also had a temporary bridge that limited the truck load to 14 tons. The shortest route to Sinjar through the Sahela checkpoint was not allowing the IDPs to transport their belongings while using that road. At one point, more than 100 families were stuck at the Shabhid Badr checkpoint on arrival into Ninewa. By 29 June, after negotiations with authorities, the Sahela checkpoint was opened for returning IDPs from Duhok. Similarly, NGOs have also reported difficulty reaching the areas to provide humanitarian assistance. Despite the challenges, partners and local authorities in Sinjar and Al-Baaj have responded by providing food, water, mobile health care, and hygiene and other non-food items to the arrivals.



Displaced people queuing to depart Duhok to their areas of origin in Sinjar and Al-Baaj districts, Ninewa.
[Photo Credit: Barzani Charity Foundation]

Surge in COVID-19 Cases

The loosening of movement restrictions and curfews in late May contributed to a sharp increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases in June, with 42,670 new cases confirmed and 1,738 people dying during the month. Baghdad saw the majority of new cases, however all governorates reported significant increases, which the World Health Organization (WHO) described

as an “acute phase of community transmission”. By the end of June, Iraq’s cases had doubled in 13 days and deaths had doubled in 11 days.

With around 10,000 tests being performed daily, WHO noted that the surveillance and laboratory verification system had limited capacity, suggesting that the real number of cases would be at least double. Although the positive test rate was 8.9 per cent at the end of June, the case fatality rate (CFR) was around 3.9 per cent, indicating that cases were predominantly mild or moderate, and that the health system was coping with the number of cases.

Baghdad and Sulaymaniyah accounted for 48 per cent of all active cases by the end of June, although all governorates witnessed sharp increases. Enhanced surveillance, laboratory verification, infection prevention and case management activities were needed in all governorates. Mirroring global patterns, the highest CFR was observed among older patients, although more than one third of deceased patients had no comorbidities. Cases among the health-care workers accounted for around five per cent of all cases, indicating a need to improve infection prevention and control.

The first cases in IDP camps were recorded in two camps in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, triggering protocols for management of COVID-19 inside camps. A third camp recorded a case in Kirkuk Governorate. Humanitarian partners and the Directorates of Health responded with testing, patient isolation and quarantine of suspected cases. All camps have been disinfected and no transmission in those camps was recorded.

Prime Minister Visits Salamiyah IDP Camp

On a visit to Ninewa to mark the sixth anniversary of ISIL’s occupation of Mosul, Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi visited Salamiyah camp. At the camp, Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi spoke about obstacles to return, grants for prospective returnees to rebuild destroyed houses, and the establishment of a government committee within the month to work closely with humanitarians on obstacles to return. Addressing the IDPs, Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on returns, as well as the impacts of the economic and oil budget crises on durable solutions. IDPs asked the Prime Minister about missing family members; he promised to personally discuss the issue of missing persons with the Governor of Ninewa.

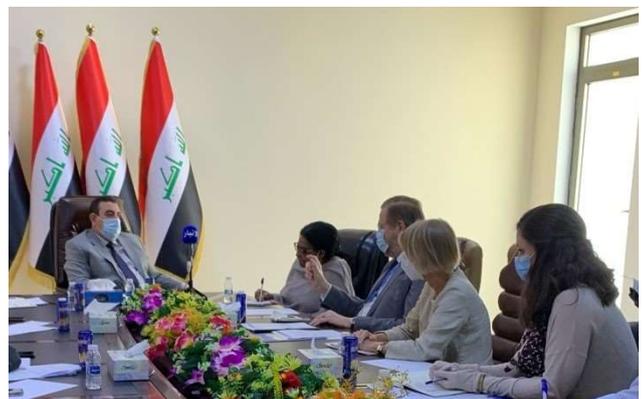


Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi visits Salamiyah IDP camp in Ninewa on 10 June. [Photo Credit: ACTED]

Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. Visits Anbar, Meets with Governor

On 14 June, acting Humanitarian Coordinator Richard Dictus travelled to Anbar to meet with Governor Dr. Ali Farhan Al-Dulaimi. The Governor and Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. were joined by Mazin Al-Dulaimi, Advisor to the Governor for IDPs, and Ayman Aswad, Advisor to the Governor for International Affairs and NGOs, as well as representatives of OCHA, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme.

Dr. Al-Dulaimi extended his appreciation for the role of the United Nations in stabilization and assistance to displaced people. He noted that Anbar was one of the most affected governorates in the war against ISIL, with more than 85 per cent of people becoming displaced. Dr. Al-Dulaimi also highlighted the importance of UN agencies in the stabilization of returns areas, including clearance of explosive ordnance. Mr. Dictus emphasized that for returns to be durable and sustainable, returnees need access to housing, infrastructure, services and income-generating opportunities. Both spoke of the need for effective coordination through the Anbar Governorate Returns Committee to plan, facilitate and communicate on returns, as well as camp consolidation and closures.



Governor of Anbar (left) and Acting Humanitarian Coordinator (middle) meet in Ramadi on 14 June [Photo Credit: OCHA]



COVID-19 awareness-raising campaign in Baghdad, 30 June. [Photo Credit: WHO]

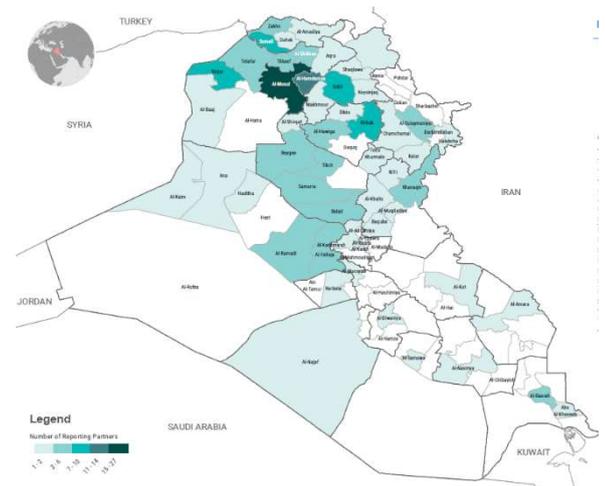
The Governor noted the current challenges around returns for people with perceived or actual affiliation with ISIL. The Anbar Government has engaged in a lengthy process of negotiations with tribal and community leaders that have allowed many such families to return to their areas of origin. He noted that community reconciliation programmes had been instrumental, and that collective punishment and discrimination of relatives of ISIL members was not acceptable. Despite this, he noted that community trauma was such that some people might not be able to return to their homes, meaning some might need to settle in new areas.

Social cohesion programmes, youth programmes, vocational training and income generation opportunities and affordable housing were all mentioned as priorities for stabilization and durable solutions.

Mapping Humanitarian Partner Presence for COVID-19 Response

The Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) monitoring framework is being used to map the operational presence of humanitarian partners (by cluster) contributing to COVID-19 response. For April to June 2020, the operational presence 3W (who does what, where) reports 48 organizations implementing COVID-19-related activities under the HRP. The clusters with the highest number of active partners are the Health Cluster, Child Protection Sub-Cluster, Protection Cluster and WASH Cluster.

The ongoing development of 3W products will further highlight partners working on COVID-19-related activities and priority 2020 HRP activities, to demonstrate where the COVID-19 adaptations to the 2020 humanitarian programme are taking place, in line with commitments to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19. OCHA will also develop an online 3W dashboard that will enable partners to be tracked to a sub-district and location level.



The OCHA 3W maps can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3fK3AKs>

Iraq Participates in Online Conference on Displacement

On 9 June, Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein spoke about the challenges facing refugees and IDPs during the COVID-19 pandemic and called for coordination and sustainable financing to meet the challenges, in Iraq's case due to the fall in oil prices. Foreign Minister Hussein thanked United Nations agencies and donors working to support the improvement of health facilities and staff capabilities to ensure that displaced people, who are facing a "double challenge", receive appropriate and timely treatment in camps and other settlements. Foreign Minister Hussein noted one of the achievements of Iraqi authorities was the suspension of IDP deployments as security personnel, as well as expanding health protocols in camps and other displacement sites.

The virtual event, hosted by the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in partnership with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, discussed "The Situation of Refugees and Other Displaced Persons during the Pandemic: The Need for International Cooperation". Other speakers included the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the foreign ministers of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Pakistan, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, the Deputy Director-General of WHO and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Cash and Liquidity Crisis

Humanitarian NGOs in Iraq have undertaken scenario planning for the cash flow crisis which has had an impact on humanitarian operations. Noting that there have been challenges around banking and accessing cash, the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq has identified ways in which COVID-19's economic crisis is making it difficult for NGOs to access international and domestic funds, pay staff and overheads, and implement humanitarian programmes. The plan identifies scenarios where further deterioration of the economic situation and/or the COVID-19 situation would trigger different actions or impact.

Formation of New Government Completed

On 6 June, the Iraqi Parliament voted on the remaining seven portfolios in the government of recently appointed Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. The new government confirmed the nominations for the remaining Cabinet posts of migration and displacement, oil, foreign affairs, trade, culture, agriculture and justice.

2020 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING OVERVIEW

US\$660.7M

TOTAL HRP & COVID-19 FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

(US\$263.3M)

TOTAL COVID-19 COMPONENT⁸



US\$167.6M¹

FUNDING RECEIVED FOR HRP & COVID-19 as of 30 June 2020

US\$493.1M

HRP & COVID-19 UNMET REQUIREMENTS as of 30 June 2020

(US\$49.6M)

COVID-19 FUNDING RECEIVED

(US\$213.8M)

COVID-19 FUNDING UNMET

BY CLUSTER FOR HRP & COVID-19 (US\$)

Cluster	Funding received		Overall HRP & COVID	Requirements	
	Total	COVID-19 ⁹		Total	COVID-19 ⁹
CCCM	0M	(0M)	25.6M	(24.2M)	
CP	5.2M	(1.3M)	39.2M	(5.1M)	
Education	5.4M	(0M)	30.9M	(2.6M)	
EL	0M	(0M)	25.9M	(10.2M)	
FSC	23.6M	(6.3M)	83.1M	(21.2M)	
GBV	0.5M	(0M)	31.6M	(12.6M)	
Health	12.1M	(0.9M)	103.8M ⁶	(65.4M)	
Protection	3.4M	(0M)	97.7M	(53.5M)	
Shelter/NFI	0M	(0M)	50.8M	(7.6M)	
WASH	10.5M	(6.5M)	50.5M	(17.9M)	
CCS	3.2M	(0M)	15.0M	(0M)	
MPCA	10.3M	(6.8M)	86.2M	(43.0M)	
Not specified	60.1M				
Multiple clusters	33.5M	(21.8M)			

US\$323.7M
TOTAL FUNDING RECEIVED

as of 30 June 2020

US\$167.6M
HRP & COVID-19 FUNDING THROUGH 2020 HRP

51.8% 48.2%

US\$156.1M
FUNDING OUTSIDE 2020 HRP & COVID-19²

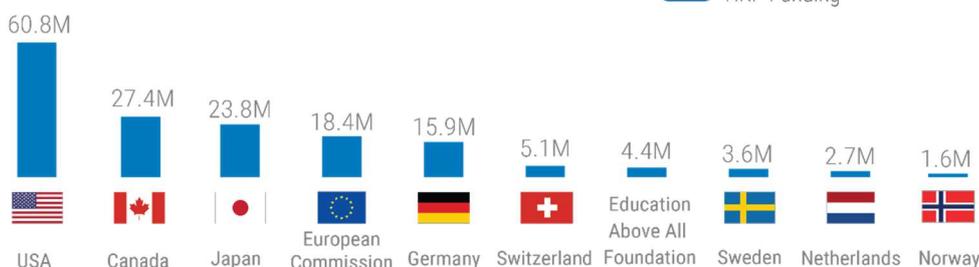
BY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (SO)⁴



BREAKDOWN OF CASH FUNDING REQUESTS BY CLUSTER⁵



BY DONOR (US\$) (TOP TEN DONORS)



HRP FUNDING RECEIVED BY PARTNER TYPE



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