

FEBRUARY 2010

A TOUGH ROAD HOME

UPROOTED IRAQIS IN JORDAN, SYRIA AND IRAQ



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A REPORT OF THE IRC COMMISSION ON IRAQI REFUGEES
FEBRUARY 2010

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Front Cover: Refugee families at Babilla Primary School, Damascus, Syria. Photo by Sasha Pippenger.

Back Cover: An Iraqi refugee, in front of the the IRC-funded Chechen Community Center in Zarqa, Jordan. He spends a few hours every day at the center, which he says is the one place where he is comfortable socializing. Photo by Jessica Malter.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IRC Commission on Iraqi Refugees was established in January 2008 by the International Rescue Committee to investigate and call attention to the plight of Iraq's displaced. This is the Commission's third report.

Over a weeklong visit in late October 2009, with follow-up consultations in November, IRC Commissioners and staff members returned to Syria and Jordan to evaluate the conditions facing resident Iraqi refugees and traveled inside Iraq to the Kurdish region and Baghdad to assess the condition of internally displaced people and their prospects for returning home. During the trip, Commissioners met with the incoming Prime Minister of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), other KRG and Iraqi officials, representatives from the United Nations and senior officials of the governments of Syria, Jordan and the United States. Most importantly, Commissioners and staff heard firsthand about the ongoing crisis from scores of Iraqis living as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Baghdad and northern Iraq or as refugees in Syria. Their accounts were harrowing.

FINDINGS

Since the IRC Commission last visited the region in February 2008, the needs of displaced Iraqis have become more acute, while international concern and assistance have diminished. In particular, assistance from European countries has begun to fall off.

Refugees and IDPs are still clearly afraid to return to their homes.

Refugees and IDPs are still clearly afraid to return to their homes. They cite insecurity, lack of access to housing and services, scarce job opportunities, ongoing criminality and persecution and mistrust of local government.

Internally displaced Iraqis. For Iraqis displaced inside Iraq, life is precarious. Their status guarantees no protection under international law, and they are often unable to secure economic assistance or the right to work where they are living. The Iraqi authorities have never acknowledged or addressed the magnitude of this problem, but the International Organization for Migration says the number of IDPs exceeds 1.5 million. Indeed, in 2008 Iraqi authorities prematurely began to shift their entire assistance apparatus towards helping Iraqis returning from abroad, even though returnees currently make up only a negligible fraction of the total refugee and displaced populations. Most families displaced inside Iraq want desperately to go home and rebuild their lives, but their return will be contingent on improved security, the availability of assistance and livelihoods, and the resolution of property disputes.

Iraqi refugees. Some refugees living outside Iraq will return when conditions improve; others have decided they will never go back because they belong to persecuted minorities or because they have reason to believe they would suffer or be killed upon return. At present, the structures and basic services that could allow a normal and sustainable reintegration are not in place, and it will take time for them to be established.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase assistance to uprooted Iraqis inside and outside Iraq. The IRC Commission on Iraqi Refugees urges the international community and the Government of Iraq to move quickly to improve and increase assistance to the displaced inside and outside of Iraq. As return is still not possible for most of the displaced, services to meet the needs of refugees and IDPs should be provided where they are currently living. The international donor community, especially the United States, must encourage the Iraqi government to do much more for its own displaced citizens, including increasing assistance to IDPs and facilitating access to entitlements and services across the country.

Help Iraqi refugees who cannot return home. Iraq must also work more closely with the international community and countries hosting Iraqi refugees to determine how best to help those Iraqis unable or unwilling to return. Jordan and Syria require significant ongoing financial help, as do the U.N. agencies and NGOs providing vital humanitarian assistance to destitute Iraqi refugees. Jordan and Syria should establish a legal framework for the protection of refugees so they can work without fear of arrest or deportation. But for many Iraqis, resettlement remains the only durable solution. The United States must continue to lead the way by admitting significant numbers of Iraqis, but it must also further reform its resettlement program to ensure that those arriving have adequate support to start their new lives safely and successfully. Lastly, European states must take on a much greater share of this burden and admit many more Iraqi refugees than they have to date.

Facilitate safe, voluntary returns to Iraq. The safe, voluntary repatriation of Iraqis back to their homes remains the most desirable long-term solution. To help the Iraq government facilitate that objective, the international community should provide technical support to the Iraqi government to manage property settlements and consolidate targeted aid to improve returnees' access to services. When families are simply unable to return to homes of origin, the government should create new permanent areas of return as close as possible to their former homes in order to provide options to those wishing to return. This effort must be supported by simplifying the overly bureaucratic procedures required to access government services—procedures that currently hinder many families from registering or receiving benefits or basic protection.

I INTRODUCTION

Fleeing war and sectarian violence, millions of Iraqis have scattered across Iraq and have taken refuge in the neighboring countries of Syria and Jordan or have gone farther afield. After nearly seven years, hundreds of thousands of these displaced Iraqis remain trapped in poverty and chronic uncertainty. Unable to return home, many face growing desperation with each year in exile. Refugee families displaced since 2003 now have young children entering school who have never seen their homeland.

Because critical humanitarian, political and military gains have been made across Iraq, attention and resources are shifting towards crises in other corners of the world. Yet the severe problems faced by displaced people inside and outside of Iraq have not been addressed and have, in fact, worsened.

IRC COMMISSION ON IRAQI REFUGEES

The IRC Commission on Iraqi Refugees was established in January 2008 by the International Rescue Committee to investigate and call attention to the plight of Iraq's displaced. It has since produced two reports detailing the challenges faced by Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan, as well as those resettled in the United States.

The initial report entitled, *Five Years Later, A Hidden Crisis*, was issued in March 2008 and was based upon a visit by the Commission to Jordan and Syria. Commission members met with senior officials from the governments of Jordan, Syria and the United States, representatives of the U.N. Refugee Agency as well as many refugees. The report highlighted the scale of the crisis and the dire plight of Iraqi refugees throughout the region. It recommended a significant increase in humanitarian assistance in the region, through host governments, international organizations and NGOs, and an enhanced and accelerated resettlement program for the most vulnerable Iraqis.

Because critical humanitarian, political and military gains have been made across Iraq, attention and resources are shifting towards crises in other corners of the world.

The subsequent report, *In Dire Straits*, was issued in June 2009 and examined the plight of Iraqi refugees who had been admitted to the United States under the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program. It was based upon trips by Commission members to IRC resettlement sites in Atlanta, Georgia, and Phoenix, Arizona, in April 2009. The report concluded that many of the Iraqis who were resettled in the United States are facing an uncertain future made even more precarious by the weak economy. With inadequate access to critical services, employment or financial support, many resettled Iraqi refugees are currently facing eviction and homelessness. Among its recommendations the report called for an overhaul of the U.S. resettlement system to include increased services to address the specific needs of arriving refugees and uniform and adequate financial support to refugees during their resettlement period. Just as the report was going to press, the Obama administration announced its decision to increase significantly the reception and placement per capita grant, a central element of the resettlement program. The IRC Commissioners applaud this vital step.

In October and November 2009, IRC Commissioners and staff members returned to Syria and Jordan to evaluate the conditions facing resident Iraqi refugees and traveled inside Iraq to the Kurdish region and Baghdad to assess internal displacement, as well as prospects for return.

Based on their recent visit to the area, the IRC Commission presents the following report. Part I details the situation faced by internally displaced people or IDPs—Iraqis who have been forced to flee their homes to other places inside Iraq. Part II provides an update about the conditions faced by Iraqi refugees who have fled to neighboring countries. Part III sets out recommendations addressed to the governments of Iraq, Syria, Jordan, the United States, other major donor countries and the United Nations.

Appendices at the end of the report provide charts and data on the IDP and refugee population. And throughout the report, profiles of the displaced describe their real-life tragedies and challenges.

II DISPLACED PERSONS INSIDE IRAQ

MAGNITUDE

Though exact figures are difficult to establish, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 displaced 1.2 million people within Iraq's borders. An estimated additional 1.5 million people were displaced in the aftermath of the Samarra mosque bombing in February 2006.

These families, uprooted by unrest and persecution, have taken shelter in communities across the country. Most say that they yearn to return home when conditions allow, though a significant number including many interviewed by the Commission indicated they would never return home and had nothing to return to. Most had fled Baghdad, but some had escaped the volatile northern cities of Mosul or Kirkuk or other hotspots.

The Commissioners traveled to the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, which host approximately 237,000 of the IDPs who have fled since 2006

, and some staff members continued on to Baghdad. Iraqi Kurdistan is one of the country's most secure regions and has a relatively good record of protecting vulnerable minorities. Despite these advantages, however, numerous displaced Iraqis in Erbil face substantial challenges because of language barriers, sponsorship requirements, lack of employment opportunities, high rents and a paucity of Arabic language schools.

The IDPs continue to face difficulties in accessing basic services, in effectively reintegrating and in regaining or establishing livelihoods.

UNHCR estimated recently that there are 2,764,111 internally displaced persons in Iraq and that between January and October 2009, a total of 141,150 internally displaced Iraqis returned to their places of origin; the returnees constitute only 5 percent of the total displaced population. According to available information, Baghdad has the largest number of IDPs, representing 34 percent of the total displaced population.¹

The IDPs continue to face difficulties in accessing basic services, in effectively reintegrating and in regaining or establishing livelihoods. In Baghdad, a large number of IDP families are living in extremely difficult circumstances. Many families lack adequate shelter, stable sources of income and employment opportunities. As a result, even when services are available, they cannot afford them. The situation is worse for those living in public buildings, which are usually located far from main service networks. Although the government has taken steps to provide assistance to displaced families, few have been able to access assistance because of bureaucratic impediments and fear of persecution upon registration.

IDP INTENTIONS

Between July and September 2009, the International Rescue Committee and UNHCR surveyed 33,563 internally displaced families comprising 178,980 individuals. The interviews took place in the governorates of Baghdad, Anbar and Babylon. The majority said they intend to return to their original locations but are assessing a variety of factors before doing so. Most commonly, the displaced people are waiting to see if security improves, but they also want to know if they will be able to reunite with their families, access their property and find a source of income.

¹ UNHCR Iraq Operation, Monthly Statistical Update on Return, October 2009.

STORIES OF UPROOTED IRAQI FAMILIES

The stories of displaced Iraqis that appear in this report were gathered at Protection and Assistance Centers or PACs. These centers have been established in Iraq by UNHCR, the U.N. Refugee Agency, to collect information on issues affecting uprooted Iraqis, make them aware of their rights and entitlements, and assist them in accessing services and obtaining such essential documents as registration cards. PACs refer people to appropriate service providers, including nongovernmental providers and offer legal services. The IRC is responsible for PACs in Baghdad, Anbar, Salah al Din and Babylon governorates.

Fatuma, Widow and Prepared-Food Seller *

In 2005 Fatuma fled the Jamela District in Baghdad with her husband and five children to escape sectarian violence. They moved to Baquba District in Diyala Governorate. Soon after, her husband, who had been a member of the former Iraqi Army, was killed by Al Qaeda in a drive-by shooting that killed several others. He had taken his car to a service station to be repaired with his son when the drive-by shooting occurred. Her husband was shot in the leg and the stomach and killed. Her son, who survived, had a bullet graze his forehead. Fatuma said that she does not think the injuries her husband sustained were fatal. She believes that the hospital where he was taken was under the control of the Madhi Army, a militia, and that he was deliberately killed by them while he was being treated.

After the death of her husband, Fatuma returned to Baghdad with her children. She settled in Al-Khadraa, a Sunni area of West Baghdad. She currently works preparing and selling food and is living in rental accommodation.

Fatuma is registered with the government as an IDP but has not received any support. The process is very bureaucratic, slow and complicated. The IRC Protection and Assistance Center assisted her in getting civil ID cards for herself and her children. They are working on getting a residential card for her and are following up with Ministry of Displacement and Migration to help her receive her entitled financial incentive of \$800. She will not return to her former home because she feels safer where she currently lives and also wants to stay where she has a job.

* Name changed for security reasons.

Many families displaced outside their governorate or district of origin will most likely not return, since their home neighborhoods are now inhabited by members of a single sect to which they do not belong.

One hopeful exception is in Diyala governorate, where Shia and Sunni families have returned and are now living side by side. In discussions with senior staff of the U.S. National Security Council and State Department officials who recently visited a community outside of Baquba, Commission members learned that an estimated 300 families have returned home.² Diyala has been the focus of the Iraqi Government's reconciliation initiative, which has helped to give IDP families the confidence to return. Even so, these families require much greater government support. In certain cases, families have not received their return stipends or are not even aware of what they are entitled to—approximately \$800 per individual, a sum that needs to increase significantly.

Assessment of Return to Iraq, published in November 2009 by the International Organization for Migration, indicates that 52.7% of IDPs surveyed would like to return to their original homes, 25.1% would like to integrate into communities where they are currently living, 19.7% want to resettle and 2.4% are waiting to make a decision.

ISSUES

Insecurity

Most IDPs were threatened with or suffered serious harm before they fled. The violence they fled was in some cases targeted and in others opportunistic. Many reported kidnappings of family members for ransoms as high as the equivalent of \$50,000. Murder, persistent threats, sexual violence and pillaging or destruction of property were also frequently cited factors in displacement. In many instances, IDPs were targeted for having aided Coalition forces or other foreign actors. Even some families from seemingly secure areas in Baghdad and elsewhere have fled. As neighborhoods became divided by sect, sectarian militias threatened or persecuted minority families in formerly integrated neighborhoods. These families do not expect to return. Sadly, refugee families have also been subjected to violence upon their return.

Economic troubles

In the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, IDPs face overwhelming economic obstacles. Because entry to the local work force is highly restricted, even the most skilled professionals—doctors, teachers, and engineers—have difficulty gaining employment. As neither the Kurdistan Regional Government nor the central Iraqi government provide much assistance to the displaced, most IDPs lack any regular source of income. What assistance there is, such as food rations, is hard to access because of extensive legal and bureaucratic impediments. Displaced families struggle to afford rent, medical expenses, school fees and other basic necessities. Because local landlords exploit the increased demand for shelter, rents have become exorbitant. Families who had sold their original homes to afford rent as IDPs now have trouble paying for housing. As a consequence, many families who were once self-sufficient have become impoverished and rely on charity to sustain themselves.

² Meetings with Senior Director Samantha Power of the National Security Council staff and Assistant Secretary Eric Schwartz of the State Department and colleagues on December 8, 2009.

Difficulty Integrating

Wherever they settle, IDPs endure complicated transitions. They are at once dependent on yet segregated from their host communities. For example, IDPs in northern Iraq must be sponsored by a local citizen in order to acquire a residence or public sector work permit. The Kurdistan Regional Government's Department of Displacement engineered this system of sponsorship in part because they feared that a large influx of IDPs could foment local unrest. Lack of community acceptance makes integration very difficult. We spoke with many IDPs in the North who expressed great concern, and in some cases anger, about the difficulties they have encountered.

Children

Many schools are crowded and must operate in multiple shifts in order to cope with larger enrollments. Life is especially difficult for IDP children whose families reside in public buildings. Most of these public buildings are far from main services. Many of the families cannot afford transportation costs, and some parents who feel it is unsafe for children to travel long distances withdraw them from school. Additionally, because curricula vary in both language and content across Iraq's northern governorates and other parts of the country, even displaced children who attend school risk falling behind in their education.

Obstacles to Return

Improved security in Baghdad and other pockets inside Iraq does not mean that basic infrastructure exists or that social and economic conditions are suitable for return. Serious risks and grievances persist, and UNHCR confirms that widespread return is not yet advisable.

Although most displaced families desperately want to go home and rebuild their lives, their eventual return is contingent on improved security, the availability of assistance and livelihoods, and the resolution of property disputes. Even Baghdad lacks adequate physical and economic infrastructure and sufficient service capacity to support hundreds of thousands of returning IDPs—particularly since the mass exodus of Iraq's professional class has left large gaps in city services.

Improved security in Baghdad and other pockets inside Iraq does not mean that basic infrastructure exists or that social and economic conditions are suitable for return.

Restoring safety, infrastructure, and services across the country will be a lengthy process. Until these are restored, the displaced must be protected and assisted where they are while preparing for return.

Documentation and access to property

IDPs are often likely to lack documentation because many were forced to flee quickly. Lack of documentation causes several problems, including loss of access to schools for children, health services, government compensation, and food rations, as well as difficulty obtaining employment and crucial rights.

Regaining their original property or obtaining compensation for losses is also an enormous challenge for IDPs, one that Iraq will have to address much more effectively and comprehensively if large-scale returns are to take place.

IDPs reported eight main reasons they cannot access their property.*	
It is unusable, damaged or destroyed.	76.7%
It was sold or exchanged under duress.	36.2%
They fear religious, ethnic or political harassment.	26.3%
There is insecurity or restricted movement.	20.8%
It is occupied by insurgents or militia.	16.3%
It is on land they do not own.	16.0%
It is occupied by members of the local community.	2.8%
It is occupied by the government.	2.6%

*UNHCR/IRC PAC Assessment, Baghdad, April-September 2009

When asked why they do not approach authorities for help recovering their property, many said they have little trust in law enforcement officials' ability to assist them, and there is no clear legal framework for property recovery. Some families fear that they will face repercussions if they attempt to recover their property. For example, if there is another displaced family occupying their house, the possibility of eviction may cause the squatters to become angry and retaliate against the owners.

Female heads of household

Divorce caused by sectarian divisions has increased the number of female-headed households. It is especially hard for female heads of household and widows to recover rented and owned property. Property is often in the husband's name, and some women may not have the proper documentation to proceed with their legal cases. There are also a significant number of women whose husbands are missing or have been killed. These women cannot access property until four years after the disappearance if documents are in the husband's name. Women who head households have an especially difficult time finding a source of income, and children in these households are more likely to work in order to support the family. Female-headed households support themselves mainly through paid work; government social welfare; assistance from relatives, friends, charities, religious groups, the community and NGOs; children's work; and begging.

Continuing Violence

Professionals remain at risk of being targeted and will probably not be returning soon. With criminality a constant concern, many who are perceived to be wealthy are in jeopardy of being kidnapped and held for ransom, as are their children.

Terrorist attacks across the country and particularly in Baghdad continue to inhibit return as well. Security has improved significantly, but the major attacks in Baghdad in October and December 2009 and January 2010 reverberated across the country. They were tragic reminders that violence can return quickly and without warning.

Mohammed, Former Shop Owner *

Mohammed, a Sunni and father of seven, was uprooted from his home in Bani Saad district in Diyala Governorate. This district formerly had a mixed Shia and Sunni population but since 2006, sectarian violence targeted both Sunnis and Shias and many have fled.

As a well-off businessman, Mohammed owned land and three houses in Diyala. In November 2006, militia members came to his home and told him to leave with his family immediately or face death. Before departing, the militia members opened fire, wounding both Mohammed and his son.

After he and his son were treated for their wounds, Mohammed fled with his family to Baghdad, staying initially with his wife's relatives. He later rented a house in Al Shaab sub-district, a mixed community, and sold a portion of his land in Diyala to cover the rent. He still lives there with his wife and five of their children.

Back in Diyala, two of Mohammed's houses were completely destroyed. The first was looted and overrun by the militia members after the family fled. The second was leveled by the U.S. armed forces constructing a military base. His third house was looted and damaged as a result of terrorist activities and military operations. Mohammed has received no compensation for his losses, despite his having a letter from the authorities confirming the destruction of his properties.

In May 2007, his eldest son was kidnapped in Baghdad. A ransom of \$30,000 was paid to gain his release. To finance the ransom, Mohammed sold his remaining plots of land to relatives at below-market value. His son was released 10

days later. He had been tortured and burned. The burns were so severe that the family had to scrape together their remaining funds to send the son to Malaysia for medical treatment, since burn treatment in Baghdad is not available. The boy is still undergoing treatment.

In September 2007, Mohammed's eldest daughter was spending the night at her aunt's house in Al-Sileekh sub-district in Baghdad, when a joint raid by American and Iraqi forces was conducted at a neighbor's house. During the raid, gunshots were fired and the man living next door was killed. In reaction, Mohammed's daughter ran outside hysterically crying, covering the neighbor's body and yelling at the soldiers angrily. The soldiers responded by hitting her in the head and the kidneys with a stick, leaving her bleeding from the nose and mouth. After the incident, the soldiers forced the family to stay inside the house and threatened to kill them if they came out. This prevented the family from taking Mohammed's daughter to a hospital until next day morning. Mohammed's daughter was hospitalized several times over the course of the following months. She became blind and then died of kidney failure in August 2008. The family has medical records substantiating their daughter's ordeal.

Mohammed does not want to return home to Diyala, since it is controlled by Shia militia. He has heard that some people who return are threatened and killed. Sadly, Mohammed says that his current location is no safer. Although his neighborhood in Baghdad is mixed, just recently a body was left outside his rented home. He says that youthful gunmen ride around on motorbikes with silencers on their weapons, carrying out

* Name changed for security reasons.

assassinations. Mohammed wants to receive compensation for the death of his daughter and loss of his houses. If his claims are granted, he would like to stay and buy a house in Baghdad.

Mohammed learned of the IRC through the IRC's Protection and Assistance Center (PAC) program teams in Baghdad. A team met Mohammed in September 2009 and is currently assisting him with his compensation claim with the Ministry of Defense relating to his daughter's death. The PAC is also assisting him with his property claims. Mohammed filed his complaint with the Baghdad Council. However since the houses are located in Diyala, his complaint files were not processed. The PAC has tried to advocate to the Baghdad Council Office to see if the case can be processed in Baghdad because it is unsafe for Mohammed to return to Diyala. This was not possible. Now the PAC will formally request

referral of the case to the Diyala Governorate and work with the PAC team there.

All displaced persons are entitled to a one-time payment of \$800. Mohammed received the money only recently, as the process is slow and bureaucratic. Currently the family is supported by his wife's salary as a nurse—the equivalent of \$250 a month—and by Mohammed's pension, which equals about \$175 monthly. They have no savings. The family pays the equivalent of \$260 in monthly rent and about \$43 monthly for their generator, leaving little for food and other needs.

Like Mohammed and his family, many people inside Iraq have been displaced from their homes and are struggling to get by. His story is all too familiar to PAC team members.

EXISTING RESPONSE

Government Assistance

At present, neither the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration nor the Kurdistan Regional Government's Department of Displacement offer a comprehensive assistance package for the displaced, and there is no mechanism in place to coordinate between the two agencies.

IDPs report that while the government does occasionally deliver assistance, it is not distributed systematically or equitably. Since 2008, the Ministry of Displacement and Migration has focused its energies on a somewhat politicized effort to promote returns. The IDPs we spoke with felt returning would be premature. Only an estimated 141,150 of the 2.76 million Iraqi IDPs went home in the first nine months of 2009—5% of the total.³

Moreover, the return program is unevenly implemented and mired in bureaucracy. Iraq gives \$800 cash grants to returnees, but IDPs report

that the promised funds are difficult to obtain. Required documentation in some cases has been lost and is too costly or too difficult to replace. Ultimately, the burden of proof for both IDPs and refugees is too high. In addition, some fear they will be targeted if they register, while others fear repercussions if it is discovered that they had used forged documents to leave the country. The real responsibility rests with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration. Its officials must be more accessible and should simplify the assistance process and increase the stipend significantly.

IDPs report that while the government does occasionally deliver assistance, it is not distributed systematically or equitably.

Registration and Benefits

The Ministry of Displacement and Migration stopped registering IDPs in September 2008 for three months. Registration was reopened in January and February 2009 but was stopped again in March 2009. Because only registered IDPs are entitled to government benefits, such as financial assistance, the decision to end the registration of IDPs precludes eligible families from accessing a number of government assistance programs.

The Ministry recently issued an order offering IDPs registration upon return so they can receive benefits. Unregistered IDPs who have no intention of going home or who are waiting to make a decision will therefore not benefit from the order. IDPs who go home are entitled to the government's \$800 cash grant. They are also entitled to letters documenting displacement so they can return to former jobs and become eligible for exemption from payment of telephone bills. IDPs who are afraid to go home and remain displaced receive none of this aid.

³ UNHCR Iraq operation, Monthly Statistical update on Return—October 2009.

International Agencies

Because of restrictive security policies, the U.N.'s direct operational reach across Iraq is limited, and as a result it cannot adequately serve the country's poor and displaced. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) tend to have greater access to Iraqis in need, but have seen their funding shrink as donors lose interest in the crisis and Iraq drops out of the international spotlight. Coordination between these international agencies is getting better, but the humanitarian community has difficulty assessing needs and determining priorities for aid. After seven years of crisis, the humanitarian community is now transitioning from a Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP)—the preferred funding and monitoring mechanism in complex emergencies—to the Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan (IHAP) so that the international response can segue from short-term relief to longer-term programs. The 2009 Consolidated Appeals Process for Iraq and the region recommended \$650 million in aid, but donors funded only 62% of the appeal.⁴ In order to properly meet the needs of vulnerable Iraqis in 2010, a more robust donor response to the Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan will be needed.

International and national organizations in Iraq remain concerned about the NGO registration process and the proposed NGO law awaiting approval by the Parliament. The current registration process is lengthy, time consuming, and lacks transparency and uniformity, thus limiting access to assistance, since only registered organizations can legally serve beneficiaries. The proposed NGO law also has serious implications for the independence of organizations. For example, one provision would permit the government to deny registration without giving reasons for such denial. Another provision would require government approval of all donations to organizations. Such a law could significantly hamper effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.

⁴ UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service, as of November 4, 2009

Zainab, Mother, Widow and Children's Guardian *

Zainab, a mother of two, is a displaced person from Hay Al-Amil sub-district in Baghdad. The area was divided into Sunni and Shia quarters. In April 2006, her brother was killed, and two months later her husband was kidnapped and killed in the same area. His body was not found until 2008. In September 2006, she left with her children and moved to Baghdad. She moved in with her sister in Hay Al-Iskan, a Shia area.

Both families lived off of her sister's hairdressing business until November 2006, when her sister was killed. She had gone to a petrol station in the Sunni-dominated area of Hay Al-Jameya when gunmen opened fire on the station killing her and many others. In December 2006, her sister's husband was caught in the middle of gunfire between gunmen and security forces. He was killed instantly.

Zainab, caring now for her children and her orphaned nephew, returned to her home in Hay Al Amin to live with her mother and her other brother. They stayed there until her brother was killed in February 2007 by insurgents, leaving his son an orphan.

In April 2007, Zainab, her two children, her two orphaned nephews and her mother moved to live in Karbala Governorate south of Baghdad. All of them were living off Zainab's father's pension, collected monthly from Baghdad by Zainab's mother. In September 2007, Zainab's mother was

killed in a car bomb incident when she went to Baghdad to collect the pension.

With no income, Zainab and the four children returned to Baghdad in September 2008. They moved into a small service room at a sewage pumping station in Hay Al-Iskan for about 5 months. In March 2009, she applied to the Baghdad Governorate for public housing. She was given a mobile-home trailer at Al-Zahraa Widows' Camp in North-West Baghdad, established by the Baghdad Governorate Council. She still lives there with 150 other widows.

Zainab is registered as an IDP in Karbala Governorate, but to date has not received her entitled benefits. She has properly submitted all of her paperwork, but like many other displaced persons, she is still awaiting payment. She does not have enough food, and she and the children frequently go hungry as they completely rely on charity. Her house trailer leaks, and the sewage in the camp has overflowed. It runs between the trailers, and the smell is horrible. This is a health risk for her and her children, and she does not have enough funds to cover medical costs should her children become ill. She would like the government to provide low-cost housing so that her children and nephews can live a normal life.

IRC is helping her process her legal documents so she can receive some support from the government and NGOs.

* Name changed for security reasons.

III REFUGEES IN JORDAN, SYRIA AND THE REGION

MAGNITUDE

Hundreds of thousands of refugees live in Jordan and Syria, and other countries in the region also host sizeable Iraqi populations. It has been difficult to calculate the total population of Iraqi refugees; they are not required to register with UNHCR, and in many cases have no incentive to register. In fact, some refugees avoid registration for fear that they will become known to local authorities and might be detained or even deported. There is no doubt, however, that their numbers are large and their needs are great. They go largely unseen because they are an atypical refugee population, living among local residents in urban centers rather than in camps.

Like the displaced within Iraq, refugees face an ongoing struggle to survive without reliable incomes. In addition to loss of property, savings, and loved ones, Iraqi refugees have experienced great psychological trauma. With no end to their suffering in sight, hopelessness and frustration are pervasive.

ISSUES

Deepening Poverty

Many refugees in Jordan and Syria have been displaced for as long as five years, and many of those who fled Iraq with substantial savings have depleted their resources. In Jordan and Syria,

refugees cannot work legally, although it is estimated that in Jordan about 40 percent participate in the informal workforce. The rest have no viable prospects for income and are entirely dependent on aid, charity or handouts. Economic conditions have compelled some families to move from Jordan to Syria, where living expenses are less but residency permit requirements are more onerous. Some men periodically cross back into Iraq to obtain funds or earn a living, risking their lives as well as their refugee status with UNHCR, which is a prerequisite for third-country resettlement. While economic commuters risk their own lives, they are unwilling to expose their families to Iraq's enduring volatility. As numerous refugees in Syria told us, these commuters should not be confused with voluntary returnees. In fact, few refugees are voluntarily returning: 32,550 between January and October 2009. UNHCR's refugee count remains constant, as the number returning to Iraq is offset by newly arrived refugees in neighboring countries.⁵ Most of the Iraqis currently registering with UNHCR for assistance are members of the middle class who have been displaced for years but only recently became so desperate that they were driven to seek help.

Like the displaced within Iraq, refugees face an ongoing struggle to survive without reliable incomes.

Cash Assistance

According to both refugees and humanitarian workers, cash assistance is one of the most essential forms of aid and must continue to be made available to refugees. Lacking reliable income or assistance packages from Iraq, refugees depend on UNHCR's monthly cash allowance to cover such essential expenses as rent, food, medical services, burial costs, and household supplies. Yet this year, UNHCR offered cash grants (scaled to family size) to only 6,000 families in Jordan and 12,000 in Syria. Because of budget constraints, UNHCR reports that it must further reduce either the number of recipients or the size of each grant in the coming months. Cutbacks by other donors are also putting vulnerable refugees further at risk.

⁵ UNHCR Iraq Operation Monthly Statistical Update on Return—August 2009

Neglected Populations

Of the refugee population, 40% are adolescents and 60% are younger than 25. Host governments and the Government of Iraq have done little to ensure that these young men and women have any access to meaningful job training or economic opportunities. The longer they remain refugees, the greater the possibility they could become a “lost generation”—and a potential threat to regional stability. Young, unemployed men grow frustrated by their inability to provide for themselves or their families. Returning refugees are leaving young people behind in host countries because in Iraq they would be at risk of being arrested or forcibly recruited by militia groups. Elderly refugees are also at great risk, especially those whose caregivers were injured or killed in Iraq.

The labor and sexual exploitation of women, children and youth represents a significant problem and growing concern across the region. It is of critical importance that services and legal protections to address and prevent this growing crisis be developed and funded.

Victims of sexual violence and those with psycho-social needs resulting from war-related trauma require targeted and timely interventions if they are to become fully functioning and contributing members of a society, be it in Iraq, a country of first asylum or a resettlement destination. The UNHCR and other bodies have noted the near universal experience of serious and debilitating trauma among the Iraqi displaced. The Commission urges the development and adequate funding of psycho-social services for Iraqi displaced wherever they may be.

Swift action is essential. The needs of Iraqis continue to grow and are exacerbated over time. Waiting to develop and implement a comprehensive multilateral plan to address their urgent needs is a luxury that comes at great cost to the Iraqis and risks the permanent loss of the human and intellectual capital of a nation.

The rule of law has broken down across much of Iraq.

Fear

The rule of law has broken down across much of Iraq. Refugees fear religious or ethnic persecution if they return. Many worry that their vulnerability will be amplified by a lack of income security, since rumors of missing or delayed paychecks to the Iraqi workforce are rampant. Others are afraid that their families will fall prey to local militias. Some refugees whom we interviewed reported that entire families were killed upon return to Baghdad. We heard directly from one refugee in Syria that her brother and father were illegally arrested, threatened and held for weeks by local authorities when they returned to try to earn some money. They quickly left Iraq when they were released.

Commission members concluded that there is a compelling need for increased attention to the needs of vulnerable religious, ethnic and social minorities within both the IDP and refugee populations.

Resettlement

Because conditions are not yet ripe for return and host governments do not allow integration of refugees into local communities, resettlement in a third country is the only solution for many refugees, a point that was driven home by the refugees we met in Syria.

Unfortunately, the process is lengthy and often unsuccessful. Thus far, resettlement countries have been able to accommodate fewer than half the 80,000 the cases referred by UNHCR. The vast majority of referrals are designated for resettlement in the United States.⁶

As the IRC Commission previously reported, Iraqis resettled to the United States have had difficulties finding jobs in the depressed economy and receive inadequate support. News of the economic circumstances in the United States has prompted some refugees in Syria and Jordan to decline offers to resettle in the United States and instead remain in limbo. Others who are trapped without viable options pay large sums to be smuggled from Lebanon to Turkey, with the hope of eventually reaching Western Europe.

EXISTING RESPONSE

Host countries

Jordan and Syria have been generous in opening their borders to the largest number of Iraqi refugees and allowing refugees access to their schools and hospitals, even though refugee populations have strained local institutions and resources. In Jordan, schools are so overcrowded that students have to be taught in shifts. Growing water scarcity results in supplies being periodically shut off across the city of Amman. While both Syria and Jordan have made an effort to extend services and adjust policies to accommodate the refugees, Iraqis do not enjoy many formal rights within either country. They still risk detention or deportation for such immigration offenses as being without proper documents, lacking a correct official stamp or working illegally. In the absence of an established legal framework for the protection of refugees, they are subject to the discretion of officials who may discriminate against them.

Government of Iraq

Considering the large number of people who are displaced, the Iraqi Government has done little so far to address the crisis. It has appointed one of the Prime Minister's advisors to lead the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, but the ministry is minimally functional and remains in urgent need of technical expertise and financial resources to fulfill its mandate. Senior ministry officials said that more resources should be allocated to it in order to improve its reach outside Baghdad. Members of his staff say they have attempted to work closely with other ministries but that stronger coordination and partnership are needed. Other government departments should be part of the process of facilitating return and providing assistance.

The government's efforts to recruit Iraqis—particularly the professional class—back to Baghdad have been unsuccessful. Confidence in the central government and the Iraqi economy remains low, primarily because of security concerns. The \$800 cash grants offered to returnees do not cover even basic costs. Because of bureaucratic impediments noted above, many of these eligible recipients often fail to receive the promised grants. Moreover, the government must coordinate much more closely with its neighbors to improve the delivery of services and information to Iraqi refugees abroad.

⁶ UNHCR says that as of October 16, 2009, more than half of the 80,000 refugees it has referred for resettlement remain in exile. See <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic,4565c22550,,4add694ec,0.html>

In a meeting with IRC staff in Baghdad, senior officials of the Ministry of Displacement and Migration said that they need assistance in several critical areas.

- › The ministry's information department needs technical assistance in the management and collection of statistics, since the unit lacks staff and technical expertise. In particular, the database requires a great deal of improvement.
- › Internal coordination within the ministry is poor. The office in Baghdad has limited reach outside the main city, and there is little information sharing between field offices. A computer network linking the offices would resolve these shortcomings.
- › Officials have urged NGOs to coordinate through the ministry in Baghdad so that they can then be referred to appropriate field offices. The ministry staff believes such coordination would help the central office understand what services are being offered in other governorates.

Looking forward, the ministry has urged NGOs to focus on shelter, citing the lack of adequate shelter as one of the main reasons families are not returning. Ministry officials stated that NGOs and the international community should focus on assisting families to return to their places of origin, adding that there are still families that are unable to return home due to security. Lastly, ministry officials said that the international community should assist Iraqis of the "professional class" who are abroad to return in order to help rebuild the country.

Donors

Senior UNHCR officials across Iraq, Jordan and Syria report that prospects are poor for additional aid from major donors to address the crisis. Donor coordination and responsiveness to Iraqi displacement have steadily declined from the level of aid pledged at the UNHCR conference in April 2007. As international contributions drop, UNHCR will have difficulty maintaining, much less expanding, its services to the many Iraqis in need. In 2009, 82% of UNHCR's budget for the Iraq situation was funded; in 2010 the agency expects only 75% of that total—suggesting a downward trend. Major European donors including ECHO and the United Kingdom have indicated to UNHCR that they will be scaling back their support to Iraqi refugees. Other donors such as Japan have directed all their funds to Iraq's ministries and provided no support to displaced Iraqis outside of Iraq. Increasingly, there is a sense among the donor community that the crisis in Iraq has abated. While most understand that Iraq will have long-term needs, they no longer think the situation qualifies as an emergency. U.N. and NGO staffs support the introduction of longer-term projects, but they also emphasize that humanitarian programs must continue to fill a vital need to help refugees.

Ahmed, Former Soldier *

"Thanks to God I have clothes to wear" Ahmed states as he walks into the room. Formerly a member of the Iraqi Army, he was discharged in 2003. The next year he joined the new Iraq Army and was assigned to work in his home district, Al Sadr City. During this period, he survived several assassination attempts, but could not elude abduction in 2005. Until his family paid his captors the equivalent of \$40,000, he was held for a week and tortured—a nail was jammed in his ear and his ankles were severely injured. To finance the ransom, his family sold their house and moved in with friends in another neighborhood.

That same year, Ahmed's two daughters were taking part in a religious procession in Baghdad. Rumors of a suicide bomber caused a stampede as the procession crossed a bridge. His daughters were among hundreds of people who were trampled or thrown into the Tigris River when the bridge's railing collapsed. Their bodies were never found.

Ahmed fled to Syria in 2006 with his wife and four surviving children, all boys. He did not register with UNHCR but his passport proves that he left Iraq. In Syria they lived off savings and sold

all their belongings. When the family ran out of money in 2009, they returned to Baghdad.

Currently the family lives off the modest proceeds from the sale of a small piece of land in southern Iraq, supplemented by the charity of neighbors and family. His four sons attend school. Two of his sons received high grades in primary school, but he cannot afford to send them to a good high school. His dream is to help his sons go to law school.

Ahmed says that he often thinks about killing himself because he cannot provide for his family. He has not registered with the government out of fear he will be targeted again. He does not trust the Iraq security forces or officials and is in constant fear for his life. Compounding this, Ahmed is suffering from diabetes and has chronic pain from being tortured. Although medication and treatment are available at health centers, Ahmed worries that should he seek treatment, he will be targeted by militias.

IRC's legal team met Ahmed in October 2009. They are currently helping him to get death certificates for his two daughters.

* Name changed for security reasons.

IV RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the current situation, the IRC Commission on Iraqi Refugees makes the following recommendations:

1. Assistance systems should reflect existing needs, rather than projected or desired circumstances. Government and humanitarian actors should provide aid to IDPs and refugees where they are now—so that one day they can return to Iraq safely and with dignity.

Government of Iraq

- › The Government of Iraq must support its displaced citizens both at home and outside the country.
- › The government must provide greater resources to the Ministry of Displacement and Migration to build its capacity and reach, make its officials more accessible and simplify the assistance process.
- › The government should significantly increase the stipend provided to returnees.
- › The Ministry of Displacement and Migration should work with UNHCR and other partners to enhance, simplify and expand protection programs, including Protection Assistance Centers (PACs), Return Assistance Centers (RACs) and Return Integration Community Centers (RICCs).
- › The Ministry of Displacement and Migration must re-open the case files for IDPs and allow for new registration to ensure that vulnerable displaced people can be identified and served.
- › The government, with all its ministries, needs to review and plan property restitution and service availability for returnees in order to simplify processes and decrease the burden of documentation required to access government services. A government strategic task force comprised of relevant ministries and supported by the international community should be established to handle the issues of return and continued displacement. Lessons can be learned from other countries, particularly with respect to property restitution and longer-term return planning.
- › To build confidence among the displaced and encourage their eventual return, the government must extend services to IDPs and refugees during their displacement.

Kurdish Regional Government

- › The KRG should ease the entry process for IDPs fleeing persecution and violence and returnees interested in relocating to Northern Iraq; it should also ease the process of obtaining residency by reducing bureaucratic procedures and providing information and services in both Kurdish and Arabic.
- › The KRG should ease restrictions on IDP employment in the public sector and support initiatives to integrate IDPs with sponsored language classes.
- › The KRG must work with the central government to ensure IDPs can access all entitlements and services under the law.
- › The KRG needs to do more to provide low income housing options that favor vulnerable groups such as IDPs.

United Nations

- › The U.N. needs to expand its reach and operations across Iraq, assisting the displaced where they are, in addition to helping them return to their homes.
- › Mechanisms for more effective donor coordination should be put in place.
- › Cash assistance for refugees should be increased, and should also be provided to IDPs. International donors must continue to support this vital assistance program.

Governments of Syria and Jordan

- › Syria and Jordan should continue to work with UNHCR to protect and expand refugee rights.
- › Syria and Jordan should extend temporary legal status to refugees and permit them to work.

2. The United States and other international donors should actively engage the Government of Iraq on displacement issues, building on existing efforts.

United States

- › The United States must continue to encourage Iraq to do more for its displaced citizens. We welcome the appointment of senior National Security Council and State Department officials as U.S. coordinators on Iraqi displacement. The recent mission to Baghdad by these officials was a very positive step.
- › In light of how much U.S. funding has poured into Iraq, more aid should be allocated to help the displaced. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the U.S. has spent approximately \$650 billion for military operations in Iraq and only \$29 billion for diplomatic operations and foreign aid. The Commission recommends that the United States continue to increase its financial support to Iraqi refugees and IDPs.

Other International Donors

- › European governments and the EU should not turn away from the crisis but rather should provide wider funding options to the international community to support refugees and IDPs. They need to remain engaged in Iraq and provide sustained support to the U.N. and the governments of Jordan and Syria in dealing with the Iraqi refugees.
- › The U.K. has a significant role to play in Iraq and should develop a country strategic plan with the Iraqi government. The U.K.'s Department for International Development needs to remain engaged in Iraq until security improves and refugees and IDPs begin to return voluntarily in large numbers.
- › All major donor governments should support the IHAP, the Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan.
- › International donors have a key role to play in providing technical support and resources to the Government of Iraq.

3. The American, European and other Coalition governments must facilitate durable solutions for Iraqis who are unable or unwilling to return home.

United States

- › The United States must continue to fix fundamental flaws in its system for admitting and resettling refugees, to include the provision of adequate funding beyond the first 90-day resettlement period in order to ensure that refugees are not resettled into poverty.
- › The U.S. must ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees resettled in the United States are addressed through targeted programming to serve trauma victims, those with special medical needs, women and children, victims of sexual and gender based violence, and highly educated professionals.
- › The U.S. needs to continue expedited resettlement for the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees.
- › The U.S. should expand the orientation for refugees and hold it earlier, which would help refugees to make a better informed decision about resettlement and give them a more realistic sense of the challenges they will face in the United States when and if they elect to pursue resettlement. Basic instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL) should be instituted for refugees who will be departing for the U.S.
- › The U.S. must maintain the integrity of family units in refugee processing so that vulnerable individuals (the elderly, women) are not separated from their families.
- › The U.S. has to address the material support bar so that legitimate claims are not denied.
- › The U.S. should streamline data collection and registration processes and eliminate redundant procedures, both internationally and domestically. Resulting cost savings could be directed to areas of great need in the domestic resettlement program.
- › Lastly, the United States must continue to acknowledge its unique responsibility in the crisis and accept and support even more refugees from Iraq.

European Governments

- › European countries must keep their doors open for refugees and asylum seekers. European governments should continue to provide opportunities for resettlement as a durable solution for Iraqi refugees and should not forcibly return refugees and asylum seekers to Iraq, as insecurity remains the principal reason why people have fled or are still fleeing Iraq.

V CONCLUSION

The personal stories included in this report would make a great and moving work of fiction. But they are not fiction: they are brutal, real-life accounts of normal people caught up in war and its violent aftermath. Their suffering continues.

In addition to making the recommendations in this report, we urge legislators, journalists and policy makers to share these tragic and still unfolding stories with the wider public. The plight of refugees and IDPs is being ignored. We are convinced that many refugees and IDPs cannot and should not go home now—it is not safe for many of them, and for many others there is nothing to go back to. And, sadly, some will never be able to go home again. For this group, we must commit to do more to help them restart their lives outside of Iraq. We must not forget them.

Salar, Manager, Camp for Widows *

In 2004 Salar was on his way to work as a tire repairer at a petrol station. He was on the bus when a woman got on and rode the bus for a short distance. She left a small bag under her seat that exploded soon after she got off. Salar lost his left leg and his arm was badly injured.

In 2005, two of his brothers were abducted and killed. Their bodies were found thrown on a river bank near Abu Gharib. After this, Salar and his family fled to Al-Rashdeyah in North Baghdad, where they lived with his brother. His brother was a police officer working in Diyala Governorate and traveled from Baghdad to Diyala on a regular

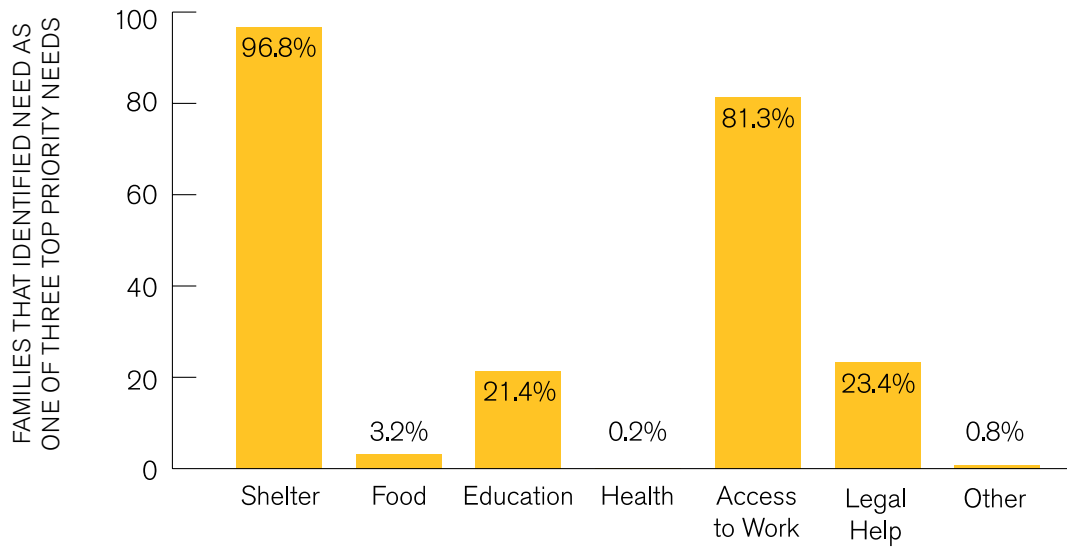
basis. One day he went to work in Diyala but did not return. He was reported missing and has never been found.

Salar is currently living and managing the Widows' Camp in Baghdad. He still owns a house in Abu Gharib. Currently there is another family occupying his home. He has contacted the family but they have threatened to burn the house down if he tries to return to the property. They refuse to pay rent. His aim now is to try and sell the house. The area was once mixed, but now it is Sunni dominated and he is Shia. It is not safe for him to return because of the continued sectarian violence.

* Name changed for security reasons.

APPENDICES

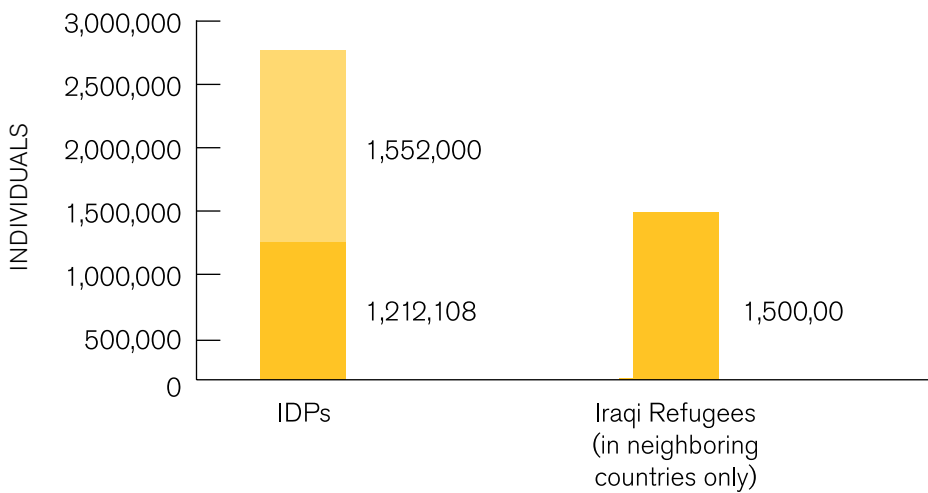
APPENDIX 1. IDP PRIORITY NEEDS IN ERBIL GOVERNORATE*



* Erbil Governorate Profile, August 2009, International Organization for Migration IDP and Returnee Assessment

APPENDIX 2. DISPLACED IRAQIS (ESTIMATED FIGURES, JULY 2009)*

Time Period	IDPs ¹		Refugees ²		Total	
	Families	Individuals	Families	Individuals	Families	Individuals
Pre-2006	202,018	1,212,108			202,018	1,212,108
After 2006	265,499	1,552,003	375,000	1,500,000	655,830	3,195,899

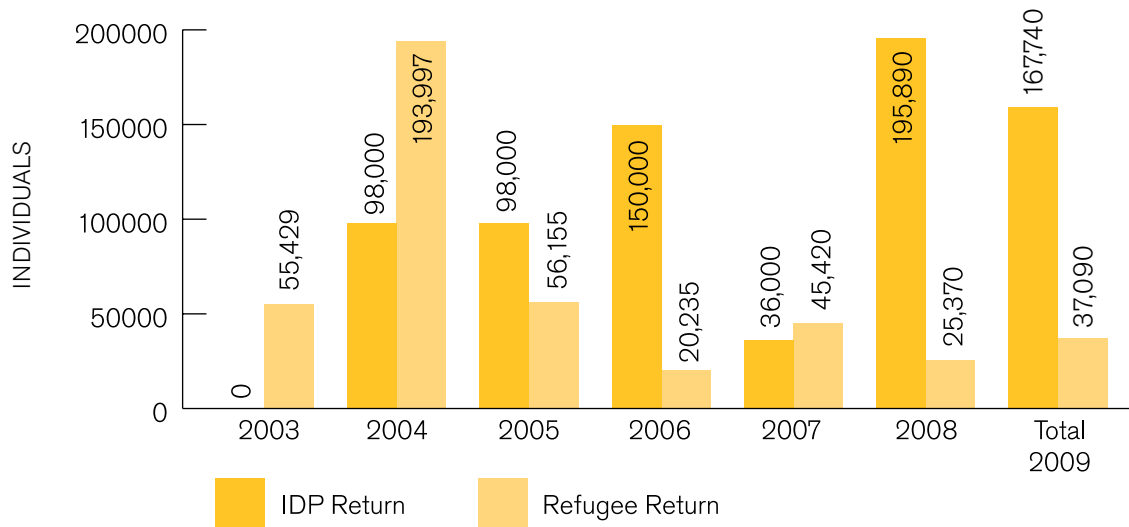


* UNHCR Iraq Operation, Monthly Statistical Update on Return, July 2009

¹ Post-2006 IDPs only. Source: UNHCR Iraq (adapted from MoDM—July '09, and KRG authorities—Apr '09)

² Average based on Government and other estimates of refugee populations in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and the Gulf countries

APPENDIX 3. RETURN TO IRAQ 2003–2009*



* UNCHR Iraq, December 2009 Factsheet

³ Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbook for the respective years

⁴ Source: Jan–June 2008 estimate by UNHCR based on various sources, July 2008–ongoing: MoDM, DDM, City Councils and UNHCR Protection and Assistance Centers.

MEETINGS HELD BY DELEGATION MEMBERS

OCTOBER 21, 2009

Baghdad, Iraq

- › Abdul Samad Sultan, Minister of Migration and Displacement

OCTOBER 24, 2009

Amman, Jordan

- › Meeting with Imran Riza (UNHCR Representative, Jordan), and Jamal Arafat (UNHCR Deputy Representative, Jordan)

OCTOBER 25, 2009

Erbil, Iraq

- › Session with a group of IDPs at Zahra Secondary School to discuss circumstances of displacement and obstacles to returning home
- › Meeting with the Kareem Sinjari (Minister of the Interior, Kurdistan Regional Government), Dr. Tariq Sadeiq Rasheed (General Director, Ministry of the Interior) Major General Newzad Kenjo Ahmed (Deputy Dean of the Police College), and Shaker Abdullah (Department of Displacement and Migration, Kurdistan Regional Government)

OCTOBER 26, 2009

Erbil, Iraq

- › Session with predominantly female group of IDPs to discuss assistance and unmet needs of displaced communities
- › Meeting with senior officials at the Kurdistan Regional Government's Department of Displacement and Migration to discuss services for the displaced
- › Briefing by IRC Iraq on displacement and return
- › Meeting with U.S. development and political representatives from the Kurdistan Regional Reconstruction Team
- › Meeting with Dr. Barham Salih, incoming Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government

OCTOBER 27, 2009

Amman, Jordan

- › Briefing by IRC Jordan on refugee needs and services
- › Meeting with Shoko Shimosawa (UNHCR Deputy Representative, Iraq)

OCTOBER 28, 2009

Amman, Jordan

- › Meeting with George Frederick (Regional Coordinator for Assistance, U.S. Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration)
- › Meeting with Hala Lattouf, Jordanian Minister for Social Development

Damascus, Syria

- › Briefing by IRC Syria on conditions and programs for Iraqi refugees
- › Meeting with refugees at Babilla Banen Primary School
- › Meeting with Charles Hunter (U.S. Charge D'Affaires, Syria), Renata Dubini (UNHCR Representative, Syria), and other U.S. Embassy and UNHCR staff

OCTOBER 29, 2009**Damascus, Syria**

- › Meeting with Dr. Abdul Rahman Attar, President of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent
- › Ceremony at Qudsaya Al Oula School to celebrate IRC's completed renovation of ten schools serving Syrian and Iraqi refugee children
- › Meeting with UNHCR Representative Renata Dubini, as well as with refugee beneficiaries and staff

NOVEMBER 9, 2009**Baghdad, Iraq**

- › Meeting with Sameer Nahi, Director General, Humanitarian Coordination, Ministry of Migration and Displacement

DECEMBER 1, 2009**Baghdad, Iraq**

- › Achim Ladwig, First Secretary, Head of Political Section, European Commission Delegation to Iraq
- › Peter Rundell, DFID Representative in Baghdad

DECEMBER 6, 2009**Baghdad, Iraq**

- › Mark Storella, Senior Coordinator for Refugees & IDP Affairs, U.S. Embassy
- › Daniel Langenkamp, Refugee & IDP Assistance Coordinator, U.S. Embassy

DECEMBER 8, 2009**Washington, DC**

- › Meeting with Samantha Power, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs, National Security Council and Scott Busby, Director for Multilateral Affairs, National Security Council
- › Meeting with Eric Schwartz, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration and Samuel Witten, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Resettlement, and Migration

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