



IOM Iraq Newsletter Volume II 2011

In this Issue:

*The Samarra Bombing: Five Years On
IOM Iraq Celebrates International Women's Day
Partnership meeting with Head of MoDM*



Contents

Foreword from the Chief of Mission	3
The Samarra Bombing <i>Five Years On</i>	4
The Samarra Bombing <i>Stories of Displacement</i>	5
IOM Iraq Celebrates International Women's Day	6
New Minister of Displacement and Migration Visits IOM Iraq	7
Security Awareness Induction Training in 2011 IOM Iraq Attends the DIHAD Exhibition	8





Two children make their way to school in Baghdad, days after a bomb blast

Foreword from the Chief of Mission

The beginning of 2011 has seen IOM continue its role at the forefront of emergency response, community stabilization and reintegration interventions in Iraq.

To ensure the successful implementation of these initiatives, the mission has sought to continually increase its presence on the ground. IOM now has over 250 national and international staff in Iraq operating out of 3 regional hubs (Baghdad, Erbil and Basrah) and 22 satellite offices.

In the coming months, IOM will seek to both widen the scope of its current programmes and expand into new activities to sustainably foster a more secure and stable Iraq. One of the first major steps in this direction is the evolution of the mission's flagship Programme for Human Security and Stabilization (PHSS) into the new Community Revitalization Programme (CRP). The CRP is poised to build upon the successes of PHSS and offer targeted livelihood assistance to sustainably benefit the un- and under-employed as well as their communities. IOM looks forward to working with the re

Working hand-in-hand with its valued donor, humanitarian and government partners – particularly the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, with whom IOM had a fruitful partnership meeting in January – IOM will continue to move beyond immediate relief initiatives to create lasting solutions for the Iraqi people.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Pillinger
Chief of Mission, IOM Iraq

The Samarra Bombing: Five Years On



On 22 February 2006, an explosion ripped through the al-Askari mosque in Samarra, killing dozens and virtually destroying its magnificent golden dome.

The repercussions of the event rippled throughout Middle East and set in motion a cycle of hostility that claimed the lives of roughly 1,000 people in the following day alone.

The wave of sectarian violence peaked in June 2006, when 17,000 people were forced from their homes in one month. Since the bombing, an estimated 1.6 million people have been displaced within Iraq.

The Samarra bombing represents one of the most significant catalysts for migration in recent Iraqi history. The magnitude and nature of the displacement that followed still pose serious humanitarian and developmental challenges for the country today.

IOM monitors have assessed an estimated 1,129,270 people and continue to conduct in-depth interviews in order to understand their priority needs, future intentions, and several other factors essential for providing assistance and supporting durable solutions to the crisis.

Since 2006, the pace of human movement in Iraq has

slowed, but the needs of displaced families and their host communities remain a priority. With the security situation improving, fewer families are being displaced.

Despite this progress, intermittent violence still occurs, such as the recent displacement of Christian families after the bombing of the Saidat al-Najat church which further threatens the country's stability.

Many of the displaced today are not only threatened by sectarian violence but also face a lack of employment opportunities, water scarcity and territorial disagreements.

The nation of Iraq remains, on many levels, in transition. There is still a long way to go, yet with a new government in place and continued support from donors, there is hope that lasting solutions for the displaced people of Iraq will finally be realized.

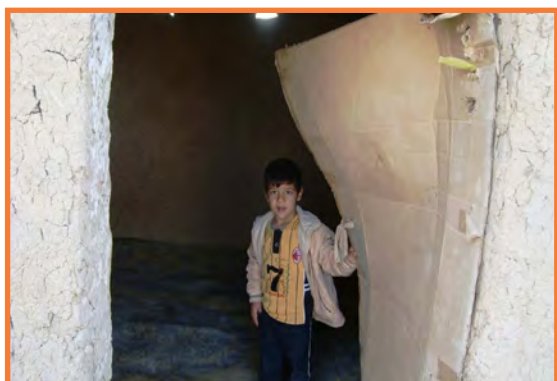
IOM Iraq will continue to provide assistance with a wide range of humanitarian and migration initiatives, including providing emergency relief to vulnerable families, supporting voluntary return and reintegration, developing livelihoods and building the capacity of local and national authorities.

The Samarra Bombing: Stories of Displacement



Five years on from the Samarra bombing, the needs of the displaced vary greatly, but there are overarching issues that bind them and their host communities together. In the Al-Dewanniyah district of the Qadisiya governorate, two families assessed by IOM monitors (one internally displaced family and one belonging to the host community) share a similar fate.

Both have suffered severely from the devastating flooding that has swept the nation in recent months and today find themselves without proper shelter. Neither family has the means to sustain itself. The family from the host community (seen in the second picture) cannot even afford to replace the door on their house and are forced to use a piece of cardboard to protect themselves from the harsh winter conditions. The environmental hazards which they are exposed to on a daily basis pose numerous risks to their health.



This story highlights the continuing theme of protracted displacement which is reshaping the social fabric in Iraq. Many families remain displaced because returning can prove just as problematic. A significant number of Iraqi families remain displaced because the issues that caused them to initially leave their homes, such as insecurity and unemployment, are still unresolved. Through funding provided by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), IOM Iraq's monitoring and needs assessment teams continue to provide support for vulnerable families in Iraq. IOM will continue to monitor these cases and provide targeted assistance.

Support for Female Headed-Household A Returnee's Story

In Iraq today there are thousands of families headed by women. Often these families struggle with the social and economic challenges of providing for their families.

Displaced and returnee families, especially those headed by women, as well as those with limited access to water, sufficient shelter, medicine, employment and education, are all particularly vulnerable and in urgent need of assistance.

Shaima is a 36 year-old woman living in Baghdad. She was happily married and the proud mother of four children when one night her life was turned upside down. In 2006, on the celebratory night of Eid, her husband and four sons were killed when a bomb exploded nearby her home.

As a consequence of the event, Shaima suffered a severe episode of depression and even lost her ability to read and write. She was referred by the Ministry of Displacement and Migration to IOM, who reached out to her by offering medical assistance. It is only today, after years of psycho-social therapy, that she is beginning to

recover. Shaima recently enrolled in a vocational training course and hopes to pursue a career in hairdressing.

Utilizing funds from the US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), IOM assists vulnerable women like Shaima with individual aid such as vocational training, medical assistance or income generation activities under the Programme for Human Security and Stabilization (PHSS).



For further details please read IOM Iraq's latest Biannual Report

Over 300 Women Attend IOM International Women's Day Celebrations



Women attend IOM Iraq's IWD meeting in Baghdad on March 13



IOM Iraq holds a meeting in Erbil for potential beneficiaries on March 13

On March 9, 2011, over 300 women between the ages of 15 and 50 attended IOM Iraq's International Women's Day (IWD) celebrations.

The celebrations were held in three separate locations in Erbil and Baghdad. Various topics were discussed including women's rights, as well as their roles and responsibilities.

The event aimed to empower Iraqi women and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to overcome the many difficulties they face.

Women were able to speak freely about the problems they encounter on a daily basis and experts were on hand to give valuable advice on a number of issues, ranging from domestic abuse to how they can make a greater contribution to their community.

The women were also asked to submit photographs that would illustrate their lives. These photographs will be posted on the IOM Iraq website in the coming weeks.

The events were held in coordination with the Iraqi NGO Women for Peace. The celebrations stressed the importance of women's rights to education and specifically, their access to the sciences and technology. Education is essential for women to gain sustainable employment.

IOM Iraq's Programme for Human Security and Stabilization (PHSS) was also introduced to the audience. PHSS offers a wide range of livelihood opportunities. Women from earlier phases of the programme spoke about their experiences and the positive impact it had on their lives.

About PHSS

Through the Programme for Human Security and Stabilization (PHSS), IOM Iraq is working closely with the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) to develop a wide-ranging set of grassroots economic development programmes. PHSS currently operates in the 13 governorates of Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Basrah, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Missan, Ninewa, Qadisiya, Sulaymania and Wassit, and supports the efforts of Iraqis to rebuild their local economies while encouraging locally focused, broad-based economic development. PHSS Phase III is supported by the Governments of Germany and United States.

New Minister of Displacement and Migration Visits IOM Iraq

On January 23-24, the new Iraqi Minister of Displacement and Migration visited the IOM support office for the Iraq Mission in Amman, Jordan. As the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration, IOM was responsible for facilitating a number of the Minister's appointments during his week-long visit to Amman.

His Excellency Minister Dindar Najman, as well as his most senior staff attended the two day meeting to discuss future relations. This was an opportunity for the newly installed Minister to be introduced to both IOM's operational and senior management staff. The discussions were also attended by the new Chief of IOM Headquarter's Emergency and Post-Crisis Division. The meeting culminated in the signing of a four-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by IOM and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) that will cover various areas of joint cooperation.

With an estimated 1.75 million Iraqi people believed to be either displaced within their own state or refugees in neighbouring countries, finding solutions for their return remains as important as ever. The partnership between the Ministry of Displacement and Migration and IOM is of vital importance in the safe, orderly and voluntary return and reintegration of the displaced.

Over the course of the meetings, MoDM was familiarized with IOM's various programmes and its future intentions. This was also an opportunity to discuss any other important issues, in particular how IOM could provide both technical assistance and capacity building to the ministry in order to strengthen its ability to efficiently manage displacement.

One issue raised by the Minister was how the ministry could create new incentives to encourage displaced families to return and how new initiatives could provide sustainable solutions that would curtail renewed displacement. IOM and MoDM agreed that a transition must be made from the programme-based initiatives that exist today to a more long-term strategic framework.

As displacement continues, the need for IOM and MoDM to provide effective and long-lasting humanitarian assistance is more important than ever.

IOM is grateful to the ministry for its ongoing support and hopes to maintain a valued relationship to assist the people of Iraq. IOM will continue to contribute to the efforts and initiatives of the Government of Iraq.



Discussions were held in the IOM conference room



Minister Najman and his senior staff discuss the ministry's future



Participants pose for a group photograph in front of IOM Iraq support office in Amman

Security Awareness Induction Training in 2011



Throughout 2011, IOM's Security Awareness Induction Training (S.A.I.T.) will continue to provide courses for all United Nations personnel who wish to work in Iraq. The training strengthens the participants' understanding of their personal security and the operational environment in Iraq, and in doing so prepares them should a dangerous situation arise.

S.A.I.T. courses consist of two days intensive classroom instruction and two days of practical field exercises. In addition, S.A.I.T. runs refresher courses for those staff members whose training has expired as well as a number of speciality trainings including first aid.

In May, S.A.I.T. and the NGO World Vision International will once again partner to jointly implement the "Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT)" course in Jordan.

S.A.I.T. aims to train a total of 480 students in 2011, whilst providing refresher courses to a further 144 participants. Thus far, five courses have been conducted and 64 students are now ready to be deployed.

IOM Iraq Attends the DIHAD Exhibition

From March 28 to 30, 2011 the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development (DIHAD) conference and exhibition was held. The overall aim of DIHAD is to contribute to the further enhancement of technically sound and principled international humanitarian and development assistance.

The forum attracted a large number of humanitarian organizations and suppliers involved in humanitarian operations globally, as well as other professionals. It was a great opportunity for IOM Iraq to meet with partners and to stay informed on the latest trends in humanitarian assistance and technology.

This year IOM Iraq established a stand of its own to display its activities. The theme of the event was 'new technologies' and how they could impact humanitarian and development operations.

Next year IOM Iraq hopes to use the exhibition to increase their global and regional presence and possibly contribute to the sessions with senior level speakers.



The IOM Iraq Mission was set up in January 2003 in preparation for the overwhelming humanitarian need following the collapse of the former regime.

IOM maintains valued partnerships and close coordination with local Iraqi authorities and various Ministries. IOM is integrated into all the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Coordination Structure, and is also fully engaged in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Iraq 2011-2014.

IOM currently employs 250 staff inside Iraq, and 100 in Amman. Staff in Iraq operate out of three regional hubs: Erbil, Baghdad, and Basrah, as well as sub/satellite offices in all 18 governorates.

Who supports us?

IOM Iraq is currently supported by the Governments of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Contact us

Chief of Mission
Michael Pillinger
mpillinger@iom.int

Mission phone: + 962 6 56 59 660
Mission fax: + 962 6 56 59 661

Mission website:
www.iomiraq.net

HQ website:
www.iom.int

Edited by

Public Information Assistant
Bertram Chambers
bchambers@iom.int

Cover Design by Rami Abeda

Photos ©IOM

