



# IOM Iraq Newsletter Volume III 2011

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*An IOM monitoring visit to Bajilla Sarkavruk village in Ninewa*

## Foreword from the Chief of Mission

As we enter the second half of 2011 IOM has taken the lead in community stabilization while continuing its reintegration and emergency assistance efforts within Iraq.

Maintaining awareness from its well placed and highly effective array of monitors, IOM has continuously assessed the status of fragile communities and supplied assistance according to their needs. There will continue to be particular emphasis on the most vulnerable groups in needy communities, including IDPs, returnees and female-headed households.

IOM Iraq's programmes aim to alleviate poverty and address the most immediate needs of vulnerable families. This builds confidence in the ability of community groups to manage their own development and advocate for their needs, and enhances the skills and responsiveness of local and regional government.

We will continue to empower local communities to take the lead in their own development. IOM's broad network of field staff ensures that local stakeholders work and learn side-by-side with our staff and ultimately create sustainable development structures that will continue long after IOM exits.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Pillinger  
Chief of Mission, IOM Iraq

## IOM responds to displacement caused by recent flooding in northern Iraq

During April, several governorates in northern and central Iraq experienced heavy storms, causing severe flooding which damaged or destroyed the homes of many vulnerable families.

Those most affected by the flooding had been living in squatter settlements in improvised shelters generally built out of mud and reeds, making them especially fragile and unable to withstand the flooding and heavy rains. These families not only lost their homes but the majority of their possessions.

In cooperation with local authorities, Governorate Emergency Cells (GECs), local Mukhtars, NGOs, and other UN agencies on the ground, IOM field monitors assessed the situation of families in Kerbala, Ninewa, Sulaymaniyah, and Erbil governorates. As a direct result, IOM Iraq was in a position to react quickly and positively with emergency distributions to the most vulnerable populations.

For families who experienced significant damage to their homes, assistance was provided in the form of bed frames, mattresses, blankets, pillows, plastic chairs and tables, gas stoves, ice chests, and water purifiers, as well as emergency tents to help alleviate the affects of such sudden displacement. These supplies helped to replace the basic household items that were damaged in the storm, and eased the burden on the families as they repaired their homes.

As the leading agency in emergency assistance in Iraq, IOM responded rapidly to this crisis by deploying field staff to the affected villages within 48 hours to assess the situation and determine the needs of the families who suffered from the flooding. In total, IOM distributed emergency relief items to 336 vulnerable families (an estimated 2,000 individuals).

With funding generously provided by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), IOM Iraq remains poised to assist those in greatest need as a result of natural disasters such as sudden flooding.



*Many of the families lost their homes and possessions*



*A child affected by storms in Kerbala receives IOM assistance*



*Resident of Warte receives his relief items*

## IOM Iraq partners with Mines Advisory Group to safely remove mines from Karez restoration site



*MAG not only removed the mines but with the help of IOM educated the local population on mine awareness and safety*

IOM Iraq has partnered with the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to safely remove landmines from a karez restoration site in the northern governorate of Sulaymaniyah.

Since March 2011, IOM has been working to restore traditional “karez” systems in the Halabja district of Sulaymaniyah. Karezes are ancient traditional water systems which provide rural areas with irrigation and drinking water in a sustainable manner. The project is supported by funding from the US Government, and is planned to cover the restoration of 10 karezes.

At the beginning of May, a team of IOM staff and local community members excavating a karez in a small village discovered several landmines scattered around the site. IOM immediately contacted the local office of MAG and a joint assessment was undertaken to evaluate the situation. The mines were found to be over 20 years old, and had recently washed down into the karez site from a nearby mountain.

A team of experts from MAG returned to the karez soon after the assessment and conducted a full demining operation to clear the work site of any landmines or other dangerous remnants of war. After marking the site and constructing a stone wall to prevent any further mines from being washed down from a higher elevation, the site was declared clear and the karez team was able to safely return to work.

“IOM and MAG have doubly benefitted our village” said Mr. Kamaran, the owner of the karez. “Now we

will have both fresh water and an area safe from landmines.”

To further educate and protect members of the communities in which they are working, IOM and MAG followed up on the demining operation by holding a Mine Risk Education training session. The session was held on May 10 in Halabja city, and was attended by four IOM staff and 16 community members, as well as a representative from the military. A team of MAG trainers instructed participants on the various types of mines and other explosives common to Iraq, and what to do should they encounter one.

“We sincerely appreciate MAG’s assistance with demining our karez site and educating our staff and members of the community on the risks posed by mines” said IOM Project Manager Lucie Dupertuis.

For further information on the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), please visit: [www.maginternational.org](http://www.maginternational.org)



*A karez following IOM restoration*

## IOM Iraq's Medical Referral Initiative



Utilizing its network of external partners, IOM refers children in need of urgent medical attention to local doctors committed to the humanitarian cause within Iraq.

IOM Iraq's ongoing Medical Referral Initiative has proven immensely successful in 2011 and continues to expand throughout the country. As a result of these external referrals, six beneficiaries in Iraq have been provided with vital medical consultations and surgeries. Many more referral cases are currently underway, as IOM has begun conducting nearly one external referral each week.

Below is the story of Mahmood, a small boy who was recently assisted by IOM in receiving medical aid.

### A Medical Referral Success Story

In May 2011, IOM staff conducting an assessment of a village in the Shekhan district of Ninewa met with a family whose three-year-old son was suffering from a severe hernia.

Mahmood, a bright, inquisitive boy who loves playing with his older brother, had been born with the condition, which had grown worse with time and often caused him severe discomfort.

After gathering further details on Mahmood's case, IOM contacted Dr. Qadir Dosky at the Dahuk Paediatric Teaching Hospital. Dr. Dosky generously agreed to donate the time and resources necessary to treat Mahmood. Dr. Dosky described Mahmood's case as one of the most severe hernias he had ever seen in a child of that age.

"Left untreated, hernias get progressively worse, and there's no telling when the condition could suddenly become life-threatening," said Dr. Dosky. "It was crucial to operate on Mahmood as soon as possible to give him the best chance for a healthy future."

The surgery took place on June 5. IOM staff picked up Mahmood and his father from their home and accompanied them throughout the surgery and recovery period.

The procedure went smoothly and quickly under the expert hand of Dr. Dosky, and Mahmood was up eating and playing with his new toy truck less than an hour later. Mahmood's father and mother were overjoyed at the success of the surgery, and expressed their gratitude toward Dr. Dosky and IOM for helping their son.

"This case shows the IOM referral mechanism at its best" said IOM Head of Erbil Hub Lado Gvilava. "Thanks to the generous contribution of Dr. Dosky and the dedication of our staff in the field, Mahmood was able to get the help he needed."



## IOM's Community Revitalization Programme establishes poultry farm in Anbar



Anbar is the largest governorate in Iraq, and has a population of 1.4 million people. 40.5% of Anbar residents live in rural areas, and thus rely heavily on agricultural production for their livelihoods.

Unfortunately, the agriculture sector in Anbar has been greatly hampered by decades of conflict, international sanctions, destructive former government policies, and more recently, drought. As a result, more than 80% of staples are imported in Anbar, hurting the local economy and compromising the quality of many goods that currently circulate throughout Iraq.

To address this issue and stimulate the local economy, IOM Iraq's Community Rehabilitation Initiatives (CRIs) has partnered with a community management team (CMT) and the Agriculture Division of the Government of Iraq to implement a poultry farm project in Garma village, Anbar. The Agriculture Division provided many of the start-up materials for the farm, including a facility with heating and cooling systems, a feed grinder for chickens and an acceptable waste-disposal system. In addition, they conducted training courses for twenty returnee beneficiaries on how to maintain the farm.

IOM provided 10,000 young chickens, fodder, sawdust for the floor, vaccines, vitamins, and diesel fuel for the farm's generator. As stated by a senior Iraqi agricultural engineer, "the project serves as the cornerstone of poverty reduction and economic stability, and shows that it is not too late to fight against hunger and poverty in Anbar."

The project has been incredibly successful, and has provided long-term employment for a local agricultural engineer who supervises the plant, a veterinarian who cares for the chickens, and twenty local laborers who conduct daily routine work to uphold and maintain the farm. One beneficiary claimed that as a result of the new job, he and his fellow workers "see big changes in our lives. Our families were facing difficult times, and we were struggling to provide necessary items. Now, the project has enabled us to provide for our families and pay all our expenses."

This project has not only provided these people with crucial employment opportunities but also, by building the capacity of the local workers, has given this community a renewed hope that long-term economic growth is possible for them.

### About the IOM Community Revitalization Programme

Formerly known as the Programme for Human Security and Stabilization (PHSS), the Community Revitalization Programme (CRP) is a comprehensive, community-based initiative that empowers local communities to take the lead in their own development. CRP initiatives are community led and IOM's broad network of field staff ensures that local stakeholders work and learn side-by-side with IOM, ultimately creating sustainable development structures that continue after IOM exits. Community Rehabilitation Initiatives (CRIs) support livelihood assistance that IOM provides by improving the community's shared economic and social assets. This programme is currently supported by the Governments of Germany and the United States.

## Movements and Assisted Migration (MAM)

Since the reestablishment of the Iraq Mission in 2003, IOM has facilitated the voluntary return and reintegration of those Iraqi nationals wishing to travel back to their home country, provided resettlement support to Iraqi refugees and assisted in the evacuation of third country nationals (TCNs) affected by conflicts and violence in Iraq.

So far in 2011, 1,340 beneficiaries have been assisted in their voluntary return to Iraq.

### Iraqi Minor is Reunited with her Father in Sweden

On June 15, 2011, MAM in coordination with UNHCR, arranged the movement of a minor from Baghdad to be reunited with her father in Sweden.

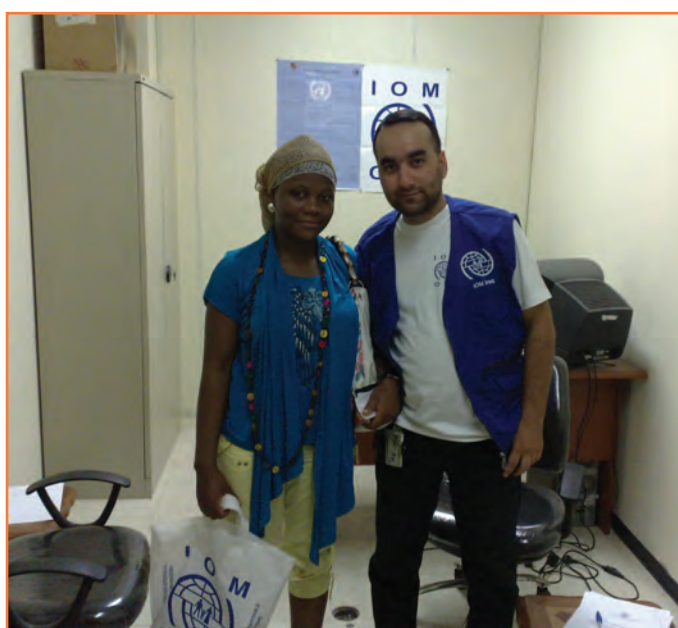
IOM's MAM conducted the travel arrangements and secured one of its own staff from Amman to escort the minor from her point of departure in Baghdad to her final destination where she was happily reunited.

Her father was made ecstatic by her return. "Thanks to IOM's support, my daughter has safely returned to us."

In 2011, 872 beneficiaries have received resettlement assistance from IOM's MAM programme.



### Ugandan Migrant Returns Home Under TCN Programme



IOM is also committed to providing immediate humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Third Country Nationals (TCNs) who wish to leave Iraq but do not have the means to do so.

MAM recently assisted a Ugandan woman working in Iraq to return home. The woman came to Iraq to work as a maid but was treated so badly that she decided to contact a nearby IOM office to request assistance.

IOM responded quickly to her appeal and in coordination with the local authorities, was able to help her return home.

Since March 2003, IOM has assisted over 7,500 TCNs who wished to leave Iraq.

IOM Iraq was established in January 2003 in anticipation of overwhelming humanitarian needs arising from imminent military action and ensuing conflict. Since then its presence and range of operations across Iraq have grown considerably.

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

### Who currently 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

### Visit IOM Iraq's new website:

[www.iomiraq.net](http://www.iomiraq.net)

Edited by

Public Information Assistant  
Bertram Chambers  
bchambers@iom.int

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