



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, VALERIE AMOS**

All Member States Briefing on Iraq
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As delivered

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for joining us today. I wanted to take the opportunity of my visit to Geneva to brief you all on my recent visit to Iraq. I am pleased to be joined by H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Sabir Ismail from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq.

During a three-day visit from 11-14 September, I had the opportunity to meet with Ministers, officials and partners in Baghdad and Erbil. I also visited IDP sites in Dohuk Governorate, which is facing the brunt of the displacement crisis. Some 1.8 million Iraqis have been displaced since the beginning of 2014, 600,000 since August. 850,000 of them have sought refuge in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Of these, some 520,000 people are in Dohuk Governorate, including 90,000 living in the open, in unfinished buildings, under highways, and in parks. A major humanitarian crisis is unfolding with huge impact, in parts of the Kurdistan region but also in other areas of the country. In recognition of this, the humanitarian community has declared the crisis to be among its most complex and challenging emergencies, and one of our highest priorities.

I am extremely concerned at the continuing volatility and instability of the security situation across Iraq, which is fuelling further displacement and impacting humanitarian access. I met with people from minority communities still too afraid to return to their communities. The Chaldean Archbishop expressed his fears about the numbers of minorities fleeing the country. As the world focuses on the threat to global peace and security posed by the presence of ISIL in Iraq, it is important that the humanitarian impact of the conflict is also recognised. Protection needs are particularly acute as ISIL and armed militias terrorise and brutalise ordinary people. The stories I was told are horrific. And as always it is the women and children who are bearing the brunt of the impact of the crisis. 50 % of the displaced are children.

UN agencies and humanitarian partners have adopted a ‘whole of Iraq’ approach. The response effort in Kurdistan Region and the rest of Iraq continues to be scaled up: UNHCR is supporting more than 300,000 displaced people in Iraq’s 19 governorates; UNICEF has reached nearly half a million people with water and sanitation support.

Emergency water and sanitation services in Dohuk Governorate have provided over 100,000 people with hygiene supplies, water and sanitation facilities; and the World Health Organization has provided medicines and medical supplies to nearly a million people this year. The World Food Programme (WFP) has reached nearly 900,000 people with food aid and is working with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to address longer-term food insecurity. But it is not really enough given the speed and scale of the escalation of the crisis.

I met President Masum, Deputy Prime Minister Mutlaq - who chairs the High-Level Committee on IDPs - , Prime Minister Barzani of the Kurdistan Regional Government, and other Ministers. Coordination efforts between Erbil and Baghdad need to be strengthened and progress needs to be made on the payment of salaries to all civil servants, dispatch of medical supplies through the central system and food distribution through the public distribution system from the federal authorities, now that the new Iraqi Government is in place.

The support of Member States, including the generous contribution from Saudi Arabia, has aided our response efforts. We have received 712 million dollars in total, including 500 million from Saudi Arabia. But with winter approaching, a much larger, coordinated effort is needed. In collaboration with the Kurdish Regional Government, the UN is finalizing an operational plan to meet urgent shelter, education and other basic needs over the next two months.

A national strategy for addressing this latest humanitarian crisis in Iraq is still needed, as it is clear that the situation on the ground will remain volatile for the foreseeable future. On our part, the UN and partners continue to streamline coordination mechanisms and scale up our presence and activities to ensure the response keeps pace with the needs. A revised strategic response plan is being developed, to account for humanitarian needs until the end of 2014. It will be issued in October.

Thank you all for your continued support to the Iraq response.