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Home Office

Country Information and Guidance

Iraq: Humanitarian situation

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Preface

This document provides country of origin information (COI) and guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the guidance contained within this document; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country Information

The COI within this document has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve the guidance and information we provide. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this document, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Guidance

Updated: 17 August 2016

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of Claim

- 1.1.1 That the general humanitarian situation in Iraq is so severe as to make removal a breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

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2. Consideration of Issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For further guidance on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Assessment of risk

i. Refugee Convention

- 2.4.1 Decision makers should first consider if the person faces persecution or serious harm for a Refugee Convention reason noting that a state of civil instability and/or where law and order has broken down does not of itself give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution for a Convention reason.
- 2.4.2 Where the person qualifies under the Refugee Convention, decision makers do not need to go on to make an assessment of the need for protection firstly under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and if that is unsuccessful, under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive.
- 2.4.3 It is only if the person does **not** qualify under the Refugee Convention that decision makers need to make an assessment of the need for protection firstly under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and, if that is unsuccessful, under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive.

ii. Humanitarian situation

- 2.2.1 The humanitarian situation has deteriorated because of the ongoing conflict between Iraqi government (and associated forces) and Daesh (Islamic State). The UN categorised Iraq's situation as a level 3 emergency, its

highest alert level (see [Humanitarian conditions](#)). As of June 2016, an estimated 8.2 million people – almost a quarter of the population – need humanitarian assistance (see [Humanitarian assistance – People in need](#)).

- 2.2.2 Since January 2014 almost 3.4 million civilians were displaced, particularly to (and within) the ‘contested’ governorates of Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninewah and Salah al-Din; Baghdad; and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) (see [Internally Displaced Persons \(IDPs\)](#)). The living conditions of IDPs vary. Most live in private settings, with a minority in IDP camps (an exception to this trend can be found in Dohuk governorate in the KRI, which hosts a large population in IDP camps). The conditions IDPs face varies depending on their social and economic connections, and means. Some people lack food, shelter and other essential services. Aid is provided through an international operation overseen by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), while the government has provided some support. However, there is a gap between funding and capacity, and need (see [Humanitarian conditions](#) and [Humanitarian assistance](#)).
- 2.2.3 The Upper Tribunal (UT) in the CG case of [AA \(Article 15\(c\)\) Iraq CG \[2015\] UKUT 00544 \(IAC\)](#), which replaces all other country guidance on Iraq, noted: ‘We accept that Iraq’s economy is in a poor position, being heavily dependent as it is on oil reserves, which have fallen significantly because of the drop in the oil price and the fact that a number of oil producing facilities are in the contested areas’ (paragraph 188) and that there is ‘clear evidence that the Iraqi state is the dominant employer in the country, employing approximately 5 million people. Political connections and family ties are of importance in obtaining employment, particularly in the public sector’ (paragraph 190).
- 2.2.4 The UT made a number of findings on the humanitarian situation in Baghdad. These were that:
- there ‘are significant differences...between circumstances in the contested areas and those prevailing in Baghdad’ (paragraph 129);
 - it is not accepted that the majority of IDPs live in temporary shelters in Baghdad (paragraph 193);
 - a significant proportion of displaced persons live in a host family’s accommodation (paragraph 197);
 - the percentage of displaced persons who reside in rented accommodation means that it is not ‘beyond the realms of reasonableness to draw from this that there are opportunities available in Baghdad for displaced persons to earn sufficient funds to enable them to rent accommodation if they have a CSID [Civil Status ID Card]’ (paragraph 198);
 - there is a ‘small percentage of displaced persons who are recorded as living in places other than a host family’s, or rented accommodation’ (paragraph 199);
 - there is evidence regarding ‘numerous organisations operating in Baghdad that provide assistance to displaced persons’ (paragraph 200);

- ‘...evidence from UNHCR-Iraq reveals that of April 2015 it had a branch office in Baghdad and that it had established a network of Protection and Assistance Centres through its partner agencies, which include:
 - (i) the Norwegian Refugee Council, which is funded by USAID’s Iraq’s access to justice programme and provides cash assistance, food distribution and shelter;
 - (ii) the International Organisation for Migration (“IOM”) which has implemented several projects directed towards IDPs in Iraq including; income generation projects, emergency response in a crisis, and livelihood projects, which were implemented in conjunction with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (“MoDM”); and,
 - (iii) the International Rescue Committee (“IRC”), which provides a number of services for, and on behalf of, IDPs, including: legal assistance, protection monitoring, capacity building and development, protection interventions and referrals, advocacy and information dissemination’ (paragraph 201)’.

2.2.5 The UT noted that it ‘clear from the evidence...that Arabic speaking males with family connections to Baghdad and a CSID are in the strongest position. At the other end of the scale, those with no family connections in Baghdad who are from minority communities are who have no CSID are least able to provide for themselves. There are a wide range of circumstances falling between these two extremes. Those without family connections are more vulnerable than those with such connections. Women are more vulnerable than men. Those who do not speak Arabic are less likely to be able to obtain employment. Those from minority communities are less likely to be able to access community support than those from the Sunni and Shia communities’ (paragraph 202).

2.2.6 Decision makers must take into account whether a person can regularise their documents, as these are crucial in enabling a person to get employment and to relocate. For information and guidance about documents, see [Country Information and Guidance - Iraq: Internal relocation \(including documentation and feasibility of return\)](#)

2.2.7 In general, while serious, the humanitarian situation is not so severe that a person is likely to face a breach of Article 3. However, decision makers must consider each case on its merits. In particular, decision makers must consider whether the person is or is likely to become an IDP, since this may have an impact on the support they can access in the area they relocate to.

iii. Security

2.2.8 To consider claims based on the security situation in Iraq, see [Country Information and Guidance – Iraq: security situation in the ‘contested’ areas](#) and [Country Information and Guidance – Iraq: security situation in Baghdad, the south and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq \(KRI\)](#)

- 2.2.9 For guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Internal relocation

- 2.3.1 If a person faces a real risk of serious harm based on the humanitarian situation, they may be able to relocate elsewhere in Iraq. For guidance on internal relocation, see [Country Information and Guidance: Iraq: Internal relocation \(including documentation and feasibility of return\)](#).

- 2.3.2 For further guidance on internal relocation, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Certification

- 2.4.1 Where a claim falls to be refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

- 2.4.2 For further guidance on certification, see the [Appeals Instruction on Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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3. Policy Summary

- 3.1.1 In general, the humanitarian conditions in Iraq are not so severe as to make return a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR. However, decision makers must consider each case on its merits.

- 3.1.2 Those who cannot return to their home areas will become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) on return. IDPs without a support network may face humanitarian conditions which breach Article 3 of the ECHR.

- 3.1.3 If a person faces a real risk of serious harm based on the humanitarian situation, they may be able to relocate elsewhere in Iraq.

- 3.1.4 Where a claim falls to be refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

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4. General living standards

- 4.1.1 Iraq's population was 34.81 million in 2014 (World Bank).¹ Unemployment in Iraq is 11 per cent (653,000 people), with 7 per cent of men and 13 per cent of women unemployed. Youth unemployment (15-24 year olds) is 18 per cent, and higher among higher-educated youths (UNDP, Iraq).²
- 4.1.2 The government employs 45 per cent of all people in urban areas and 28 per cent of all people in rural areas (UNDP, Iraq).³
- 4.1.3 The International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s World Economic Outlook, issued in October 2015, measured inflation in 2014 as 2.2 per cent. It also predicted that Iraq's GDP, after declining 2.1 per cent in 2014, would not grow at all in 2015, although it projected 7.1 per cent growth in 2016.⁴
- 4.1.4 A report from the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI), covering the period 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2015, noted:
- 'The level of socioeconomic development in Iraq is still characterized by a high degree of deprivation (reflected by a medium ranking in the 2013 Human Development Index of 0.642), not counting territories under IS [Daesh] control. Around 21% of Iraq's population live below the poverty line with less than \$2 per day (2012 estimates). Poverty is higher in rural areas and varies regionally, with relatively higher poverty rates in central and southern governorates, compared to Kurdish governorates. High poverty rates are generally attributed to a high unemployment rate (officially 16% in 2012), a decline in education level and rampant corruption.
- 'The literacy rate for both sexes is 79% (as of 2013), with an illiteracy rate among women reaching almost 30% (2011 estimates). Only 53% of both sexes are enrolled in secondary schools and 16% in tertiary education; the ratio of female to male enrollment shows that women have much lower access to both secondary (74.8%) and tertiary (59.8 %) education (as of 2013). Such uneven access to education is also reflected in the relatively low percentage of the female labor force, which reached 17.6% in 2013...
- 'The overwhelming majority of federal revenue comes from oil income. Thus, the sharp decline in world oil prices since the end of 2014 has dealt a heavy

¹ World Bank, World DataBank, Iraq, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=IRQ&series=&period=>, accessed 30 March 2016

² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Iraq, <http://www.iq.undp.org/>, accessed 30 March 2016

³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Iraq, <http://www.iq.undp.org/>, accessed 30 March 2016

⁴ International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook, October 2015. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2015/02/pdf/text.pdf>, accessed 30 March 2016

blow to the Iraqi government's growth expectations. The loss of fertile land in areas under IS control in northern Iraq massively impacted the production of wheat and other crops. Violence and ongoing fighting have disrupted trade as many roads to Turkey and Jordan have been cut off. Moreover, more than two million people have been internally displaced since the beginning of 2014. Those people obviously lost their jobs, so unemployment rates are believed to be skyrocketing, (estimates speak of 25%, but reliable data are not available).⁵

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5. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

5.1.1 The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) identified that 3,369,252 individuals (561,542 families) were displaced in Iraq, dispersed across 105 districts and 3,823 locations.⁶ The following table shows the number of IDPs in Iraq:

Table showing number of IDPs in Iraq by governorate of displacement

Governorate	IDPs (individuals)	IDPs (families)	% of total
Anbar	635,898	105,983	19%
Babil	57,318	9,553	2%
Baghdad	521,700	86,950	15%
Basra	10,746	1,791	0%
Diyala	88,842	14,807	3%
Dohuk	398,274	66,379	12%
Erbil	391,302	65,217	12%
Kerbala	68,178	11,363	2%
Kirkuk	381,858	63,643	11%
Missan	6,030	1,005	0%
Muthanna	5,676	946	0%
Najaf	79,008	13,168	2%
Ninewah	292,026	48,671	9%

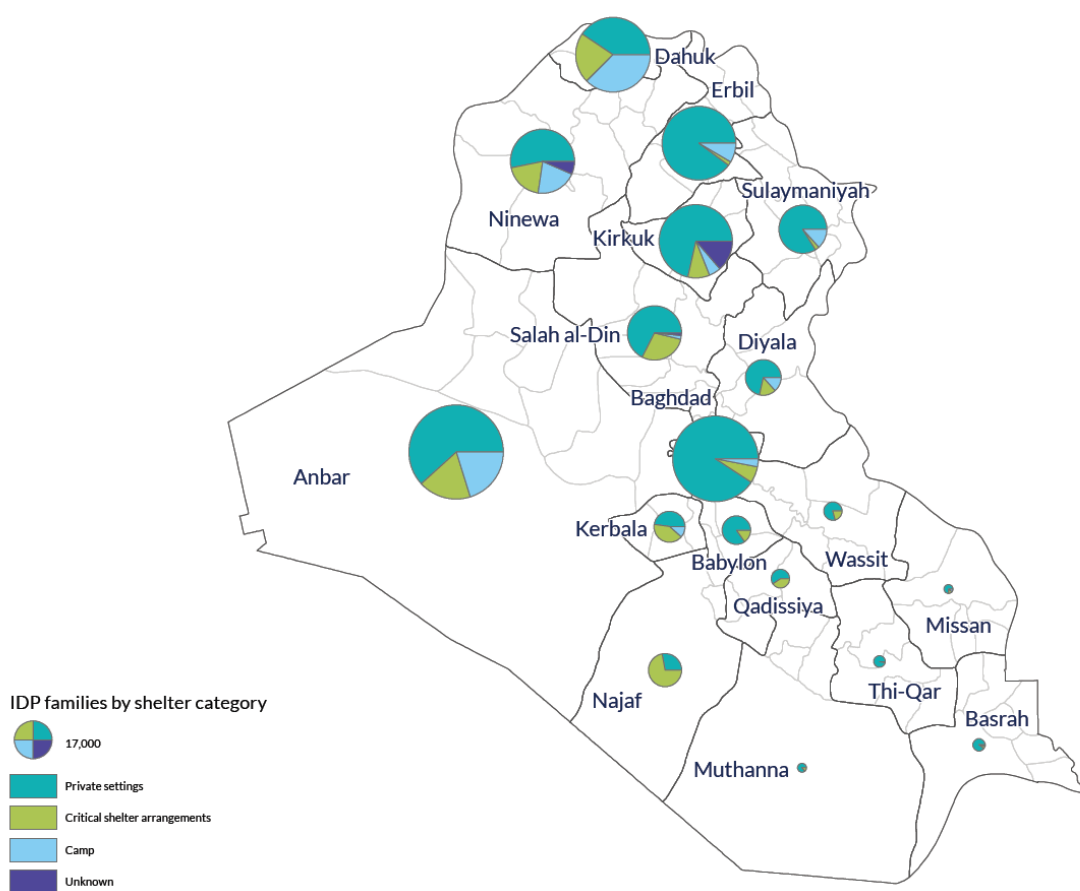
⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI), Iraq Country Report 2016, http://www.bti-project.org/fileadmin/files/BTI/Downloads/Reports/2016/pdf/BTI_2016_Iraq.pdf, pp. 16-17, 23, accessed 31 March 2016

⁶ International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, DTM Round 50, July 2016, p.3, <http://iomiraq.net/dtm-page>, accessed 17 August 2016

Qadissiyah	24,060	4,010	1%
Salah al-Din	208,848	24,808	6%
Sulaymaniyah	165,624	27,604	5%
Thi-Qar	9,222	1,537	0%
Wassit	24,642	4,107	1%

5.1.2 The following map showed displaced populations by shelter types:

Map showing shelter types used by displaced people in Iraq



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5.1.3 The same source observed that:

- the majority of identified IDPs (69%, or 2,314,632 individuals) are reportedly housed in private dwellings. Of the total IDP population, 46%

⁷ International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, DTM Round 50, March 2016, p. 8, <http://iomiraq.net/dtm-page>, accessed 17 August 2016

(1,538,670) are hosted in rented houses, 23% (763,926) are with host families, and less than 1% (12,036) are in hotels/motels

- 16%, or 525,036 individuals, are in critical shelters. Overall, 7% (247,422) are in unfurnished buildings, 3% (110,130) are in religious buildings, 4% (125,856) are in informal settlements, and 1% (35,856) are in school buildings.
- IDPs living in camps represent 13% of the total IDP population (454,404 individuals). Those whose shelter arrangements are unknown represent 2% of the total IDP population (75,180).⁸

5.1.4 For information about returns, see [Country Information and Guidance – Iraq: security situation in the ‘contested’ areas](#) and [Country Information and Guidance – Iraq: security situation in Baghdad, the south and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq \(KRI\)](#)

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6. Humanitarian conditions

- 6.1.1 The UN categorised the situation in Iraq as a Level 3 emergency. Level 3 emergencies are defined as ‘major sudden onset humanitarian crises triggered by natural disasters or conflict which require system-wide mobilisation.’ Five indicators are used to determine the level of a humanitarian situation: scale, urgency, complexity, combined national and international capacity to respond, and reputational risk.⁹
- 6.1.2 OCHA, in a Humanitarian Dashboard dated April 2016, gave a breakdown of those people who need humanitarian assistance. It noted:
- 3.3 million displaced;
 - 2 million children (out of 10 million) out of school;
 - 8.5 million needing health care;
 - and 2.4 million food insecure.¹⁰
- 6.1.3 In May and June 2015, the organisation REACH interviewed 5,225 households across accessible governorates of Iraq (except Baghdad). The following tables show the data collected from these interviews on humanitarian needs. Numbers referred to are percentages of those interviewed:

⁸ International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, DTM Round 40, March 2016, <http://iomiraq.net/dtm-page>, accessed 29 March 2016

⁹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), ‘Where we work: Emergencies’, undated, <http://www.unocha.org/where-we-work/emergencies>, accessed 30 March 2016

¹⁰ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Dashboard (as of 30 April 2016), http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/january_-_april_2016_humanitarian_dashboard_-_20160531.pdf, accessed 17 August 2016

Table showing humanitarian needs in 'accessible' (i.e. 'non-contested') governorates (except Baghdad)

Governorate	Food	Employment	Shelter	Medical	Water	Education	Clothing	Registration
Babil	69	9	1	14	7	6	40	2
Basra	66	32	84	16	1	3	2	1
Dohuk	80	32	5	30	4	6	5	0
Erbil	65	52	13	33	12	19	12	3
Kerbala	69	45	1	36	23	25	6	0
Missan	58	86	24	10	4	24	7	1
Muthanna	51	20	5	19	16	3	2	26
Najaf	11	22	16	14	7	7	23	0
Qadissiyah	80	11	0	6	0	2	54	0
Sulymaniyah	89	64	10	12	4	7	6	2
Thi-Qar	47	36	91	40	0	0	6	0
Wassit	36	54	29	16	14	12	16	0

¹¹

6.1.4 The same report found that:

- 22% of households in Dohuk, 12% of households in Erbil and 7% of households in Sulamaniyah had no regular, stable form of income;
- 97% of households in Sulamaniyah, 90% of households in Erbil and 62% of households in Dohuk were living in houses or apartments, generally higher percentages than in the south;
- 23% of households in Dohuk were living in unfinished buildings;
- of the households that sought medical care since displacement, 44% in Sulamnaiyah, 42% in Dohuk and 36% for Erbil reported difficulties accessing care; and
- of those eligible, 36% of children in Sulaymaniyah, 27% of children in Dohuk and 26% of children in Erbil were attending school¹²

¹¹ REACH, 'Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment for Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps in Iraq', October 2015, http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_irq_multiclusterneedsassessment_idps_outside_camps_oct2014.pdf, accessed 30 March 2016

¹² REACH, 'Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment for Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps in Iraq',

- 6.1.5 The UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (OHCHR), in a joint report covering the period May to October 2015, noted that ‘the persistent violence and scale of the displacement continue to impact IDPs’ access to basic services, such as housing, clean water and education’ and that ‘the number of civilians who have died from [these] secondary effects of armed conflict and violence...is unknown.’¹³
- 6.1.6 UNAMI/OHCHR reported that some IDPs also faced the threat of eviction. For example, in the first week of 2-8 September, 540 IDPs (90 families) living in the Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Kilani school in Baghdad were threatened with eviction by local authorities. Also, some time between the 16 and 29 September, about 1,440 displaced people were threatened with eviction from the Qas Suailim apartment complex in Babil.¹⁴
- 6.1.7 In a report dated 12 August 2015, the OCHA stated:
- ‘The crisis is pervasive, impacting virtually all aspects of Iraq’s economy and society, and threatening the major efforts underway to build national reconciliation and protect the country’s impressive development gains. Displaced persons are currently living in more than 3000 locations throughout the country; more than 90 per cent are living outside of camps, hosted by communities who have done their best to protect and provide for them. The cost of this generosity has been high. Health providers are struggling to deliver basic support in areas with high concentrations of displaced. Water and sanitation systems are in disrepair, increasing the risk of major public health emergencies, particularly in the summer period when temperatures soar to unbearable levels. Overcrowding is a major problem in countless communities. Already, Iraq has one of the highest tuberculosis rates in the region and measles have been reported in all 18 Governorates.
- ‘Destitution is widespread, impacting displaced families and host communities alike. Production and supply shortages and localized increases in demand have forced up the cost of basic commodities, including food. At least 4.4 million people are now food insecure. Families across the country, most particularly in the KR-I where the population has increased by 30 per cent, have been unable to cover basic needs and are relying on negative strategies to cope. Child marriages are increasing, used as a strategy by families to protect young girls from sexual violence and deprivation. Key agricultural areas including large parts of Iraq’s cereal belt remain under ISIL

October 2015, http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_irq_multiclusterneedsassessment_idps_outside_camps_oct2014.pdf, accessed 30 March 2016

¹³ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), Report on the Protection of Civilians in Iraq, 1 May – 1 October 2015, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMIRreport1May31October2015.pdf>, p. i, accessed 30 March 2016

¹⁴ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), Report on the Protection of Civilians in Iraq, 1 May – 1 October 2015, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMIRreport1May31October2015.pdf>, p. 7, accessed 30 March 2016

control raising the possibility of widespread shortages in the months ahead. Tensions between host communities and displaced families are rising, as resources dwindle and displaced are seen to be benefitting disproportionately. Half of all displaced need urgent shelter support; 700,000 are surviving in unfinished and abandoned buildings, makeshift collective centres and spontaneous settlements. Ensuring families are equipped to survive the winter becomes critical from November onwards; failure to do so will almost certainly result in further loss of life.

‘Children have been traumatised by violence and destitution. Almost 3 million school-aged children and adolescents affected by the conflict do not have access to basic standard education. Within camps, only 45 percent of children are attending school; only 30 percent are outside of camps. Schools in host communities are struggling to deal with teacher-shortages and the destruction, damage, and occupation of schools. Children are the hardest-hit victims of the conflict, exposed to abuse, suffering from inadequate health care and education and at-risk of poor nutrition. Already community leaders are worried that disaffected youth, with few positive options, will fuel tensions and violence for decades to come.’¹⁵

- 6.1.8 Refugee International, in a November 2015 report, wrote that they ‘visited multiple camps in Anbar, Babil, and Baghdad that had either no or unaffordable electricity, no reliable clean water source, poor sanitation, and practically nonexistent medical care. The camps also have inadequate food and shelter. There are new arrivals in camps every day, but there is simply no way to provide for everyone in need by using the current systems and what few plans seem to exist.’¹⁶

- 6.1.9 The same report stated:

‘IDPs are further made vulnerable by the inability to provide for themselves. Job opportunities are scarce to begin with, and there is often a fear of venturing out into the more urban areas where work might be found....The fear for their own safety appears more acute among Sunni refugees from Anbar who have been forced to relocate to Baghdad. They are routinely suspected of having ISIS [Daesh] sympathies simply because of their place of origin, and some spoke of having been pushed out by local residents in Shia areas. Thus, they were now experiencing their second displacement. While plenty of IDPs in Baghdad would like to move on, they don’t because of the fear of having to travel through that province to reach another location they might consider safer.’¹⁷

¹⁵ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Humanitarian Needs Overview 2015, 12 August 2015.
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/2015_iraq_humanitarian_needs_overview_0.pdf, accessed 29 March 2016

¹⁶ Refugee International, Field Report, Displaced in Iraq: Little Aid and Few Options, <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5633c6bfe4b03216fd2ea132/1446233807064/Displaced+in+Iraq%3A+Little+Aid+and+Few+Options>, p. 7, accessed 31 March 2016

¹⁷ Refugee International, Field Report, Displaced in Iraq: Little Aid and Few Options, <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5633c6bfe4b03216fd2ea132/1446233807064/Displaced+in+Iraq%3A+Little+Aid+and+Few+Options>

- 6.1.10 The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in August 2015 that 8.2 million people - nearly one quarter of the population - needed 'immediate humanitarian support as a direct consequence of violence and conflict linked to the take-over of Iraqi territory by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) [Daesh] and the counter-insurgency operation launched by the Government and its allied forces.'¹⁸

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7. Humanitarian assistance

7.1 Government support

- 7.1.1 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) described humanitarian needs in Iraq in August 2015:

'The Government has provided mass relief in the form of cash grants, health support, education support, shelter and food, but is faced, for the first time in decades, with a massive fiscal gap resulting from the slump in oil prices and the high costs of the ISIL [Daesh] counterinsurgency. The situation is so grave and unexpected, the Government is being forced into pre-sales of Iraqi oil reserves. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KR-G) is equally hard-hit, struggling to cope with denied and delayed oil transfers. Hosting close to one million displaced persons and refugees, the KR-G has been forced to cut-back on public services, delay salaries and halt development and investment projects.'¹⁹

- 7.1.2 A report from the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI), covering the period 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2015, noted:

'Given the weak economic and partly catastrophic security situations in wide parts of the country, most social support comes from family and tribes. The only significant social safety net is the Public Distribution System (PDS), which is the main source of food for poor people. Despite suffering from poor internal controls and inefficient supply chains, PDS has supported many Iraqi families with monthly basic food rations since its establishment in 1991.

'Delivery of basic social services has been clearly affected by the security situation in northern and western Iraq. Around half the Iraqi wheat crop is produced in areas now under IS [Daesh] control in northern Iraq. Iraq's wheat production is blended with imported wheat, milled into flour then distributed as part of Iraq's PDS. Security concerns are severely affecting the distribution of wheat to PDS recipients. Moreover, the Ministry of Trade is

[6233807064/Displaced+in+Iraq%3A+Little+Aid+and+Few+Options](#), p. 7, accessed 31 March 2016

¹⁸ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Humanitarian Needs Overview 2015, 12 August 2015, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/2015_iraq_humanitarian_needs_overview_0.pdf, accessed 29 March 2016

¹⁹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Humanitarian Needs Overview 2015, 12 August 2015, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/2015_iraq_humanitarian_needs_overview_0.pdf, accessed 29 March 2016

not able to continue transporting shipments of imported wheat, under current security conditions, into areas north and west of Baghdad.²⁰

- 7.1.3 A report by Refugee International, dated 2 November 2015, provided information about the Public Distribution System (PDS). The author, Daryl Grisgraber, reported from Anbar, Babil and Baghdad governorates in August 2015. The report read:

‘Even an essential social safety net, like the Public Distribution System (PDS) that provides monthly food support to huge numbers of Iraqis, has not been adjusted to keep serving the same people in new locations. Some IDPs told RI that they had had little trouble registering their new locations with the PDS and had received at least one set of rations, but most indicated that the re-registration process was slow, opaque, and ineffective. Aid agencies are sometimes able to fill in the gap while people wait for their new registrations, but many more people are simply going without food rations. The Iraqi government should immediately improve the re-registration process for IDPs so that they can continue receiving their monthly food rations even in new locations.’²¹

- 7.1.4 The source added:

‘The Iraqi government, various UN agencies, and INGOs are providing one-off assistance, but not returning to settlements for follow-up or additional support. As one volunteer camp administrator told the RI team during its visit to Baghdad, “Everyone is working... but there’s no plan.” Most IDPs RI spoke to felt they had had the opportunity to ask for what they needed from camp managers, and camp managers indicated they had been able to ask either INGOs or UN agencies in turn, but no support was forthcoming in response... In one Baghdad settlement, a request from a volunteer administrator to the Iraqi government for 1,000 tents resulted in the actual delivery of 100. While this was helpful (if partial), the IDPs were thus forced to share overcrowded tents...

‘Through its Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), the Iraqi government provides some support to IDPs, but it covers only a fraction of the needs. While the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has fairly recently announced its inability to continue to assist IDPs in its jurisdiction without significant international assistance, the Iraqi government has never been able to keep up with the central and south IDP population in the first place.’²²

- 7.1.5 The BTI also commented on the Government’s provision of healthcare:

²⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI), Iraq Country Report 2016, http://www.bti-project.org/fileadmin/files/BTI/Downloads/Reports/2016/pdf/BTI_2016_Iraq.pdf, p. 22, accessed 31 March 2016

²¹ Refugee International, Field Report, Displaced in Iraq: Little Aid and Few Options, <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5633c6bfe4b03216fd2ea132/1446233807064/Displaced+in+Iraq%3A+Little+Aid+and+Few+Options>, p. 6, accessed 31 March 2016

²² Refugee International, Field Report, Displaced in Iraq: Little Aid and Few Options, <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5633c6bfe4b03216fd2ea132/1446233807064/Displaced+in+Iraq%3A+Little+Aid+and+Few+Options>, p. 6, accessed 31 March 2016

'The availability and quality of the existing government-provided basic health care services are open to question, especially given that Iraq does not have a social health insurance scheme. Public expenditure on health is 1.9% of GDP (2012). Access to health services is limited (1.3 hospital beds per 1,000 Iraqis as of 2012) and geographically extremely uneven, with a strong urban/rural gap. The latest World Bank figures (2012) indicate that life expectancy at birth in Iraq is 69 years. Moreover, Iraq's pension system has structural problems in terms of financial sustainability, efficiency and equity.'²³

- 7.1.6 The US Agency for International Development, in a briefing dated March 2016, commented:

'On February 8, UNICEF and the GoI signed a four-year plan to provide support services for vulnerable children in Iraq. The plan provides a framework for UNICEF and the GoI to promote national-level advocacy for children, strengthen data collection for improving social service delivery, and develop management skills among service providers, among other strategies for reaching Iraq's most vulnerable children with assistance.'²⁴

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7.2 Non-Government Organisation (NGO) support

- 7.2.1 A report by Refugee International, dated November 2015, noted:

'For two years now, the humanitarian assistance that has reached people in central and south Iraq has been sporadic and inadequate. After agencies moved their centers of operation out of Baghdad in 2014, it became more difficult for them to do a first-hand assessment of the needs on the ground and to plan an approach to aid delivery. While the whole-of-Iraq approach was recognized as essential, the coordination meetings that happened in Baghdad were difficult and expensive for KRI-based staff members to attend, and the few groups that remained based in Baghdad did not have the combined resources to do a large-scale assessment and provide accordingly, even without the added complication of the security challenges. The annual, multi-agency analysis of the countrywide humanitarian situation results in a humanitarian needs overview to help inform the plans of humanitarian actors. It is a useful general document, but does not offer the sort of detail needed to support planning for specific populations...

'By contrast, the generally good access to displaced populations in the KRI, and the presence of so many international actors in that region, made it

²³ Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI), Iraq Country Report 2016, http://www.bti-project.org/fileadmin/files/BTI/Downloads/Reports/2016/pdf/BTI_2016_Iraq.pdf, p. 22, accessed 31 March 2016
<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5633c6bfe4b03216fd2ea132/1446233807064/Displaced+in+Iraq%3A+Little+Aid+and+Few+Options>, p. 6, accessed 31 March 2016

²⁴ US Agency International Development (USAID), Iraq – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, 4 March 2016, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/iraq_ce_fs02_03-04-2016.pdf, accessed 5 April 2016

easier for the groups to work together to provide an evaluation of needs and plan for meeting them. Security is a real concern in central and south Iraq and access is genuinely difficult and sometimes dangerous. Nonetheless, the UN agencies and the large INGOs that are meant to offer assistance need to immediately strengthen their presence in Baghdad to coordinate and communicate more easily with each other and the Iraqi government, to make realistic plans for continued service beyond the KRI, and to have enough human resources in the area to deliver aid in the moments when it is possible...

‘In any humanitarian crisis, local people and host communities are usually the first responders. With so much territory in south and central Iraq considered too dangerous for internationals to operate in, a good portion of the lifesaving assistance that IDPs receive is provided by Iraqi NGOs and volunteers that know the local areas and have connections and access to the communities where IDPs are living. The volunteers are often from those communities themselves.

‘While national and local Iraqi NGOs and groups of volunteers are providing support to IDPs in areas they can reach, the partnerships with INGOs and United Nations agencies that would normally help coordinate and fund their work have been lacking. As a result, the humanitarian response taking place in central and south Iraq is dependent upon groups with small-scale (albeit often good quality and fast-moving) operations that are struggling—for lack of funding and support—to provide adequate aid on a regular basis.

‘While in Baghdad, RI met with representatives of multiple groups of Iraqi volunteers who had formed teams to provide assistance to IDPs. In areas they knew and had access to, they had figured out the types of assistance IDPs needed. They raised operational funds from the public and their personal networks, and dispensed with things like formal office space that would cost additional money. The volunteer groups then procured supplies or expertise as necessary, and travelled directly into IDP communities to offer support. For the most part, these activist groups are not registered NGOs (though a few have taken that step). They explained that the registration process has a number of specific requirements that were beyond their abilities — things like office space and equipment and having a formal board. They are also generally not in direct contact with the UN agencies, the INGOs, or the Iraqi government for their relief work. They know that these agencies and groups exist, but often do not know how to reach out to them for collaboration. These groups do, however, use social media to coordinate extensively with each other in order to bring vulnerable populations to light and to make sure they are not duplicating work amongst themselves. They are also concerned with humanitarian principles in their work, and so are interested in partnerships with organizations that uphold them and can help them learn...

‘The members of the provincial council [in Babil] talked to RI about the challenges they faced in supporting the IDPs. In theory, they were supposed to get assistance from the central government for supporting the IDPs, but in practice there was little useful communication between the two. The displaced were allowed into the town’s local systems—health care, for

example—but it was difficult to accommodate the large numbers of new people who needed services. One of the council members explained how he would sometimes personally refer people into the medical care process in order to get them attention in a timely manner even if they could not afford it.

‘They also spoke of how two INGOs had set up two different training initiatives intended to give IDPs possibilities for livelihoods. The INGOs had been in contact with the local provincial council to get started and the council had welcomed them. But when the projects had failed for lack of planning and follow-up, the council was reluctant to continue trying to establish other similar connections with aid groups. Their connection with one of the organizers of the local group had been fruitful, as RI saw, but it was not part of a systematic plan to find IDPs and connect them to groups that could help them. As was the case in the other areas RI visited, much of the available support depended upon the connections of local individuals—sometimes in official positions and sometimes not—with an aid volunteer or a staff member of a group. The IDPs at this site repeatedly told RI that they had received no visits and no help from any organization other than the local volunteers who were hosting the RI team. It appeared that some had indeed been in contact with the provisional council members for various issues, but their numbers were few and they indicated that adequate help was rarely available. Many of them were therefore living without a reliable source of clean water or electricity, were dependent upon food distributions, and were simply scraping by any way they could.

‘Even with the international investment (particularly by the United States) in building civil society over the past decade, the NGO sector in Iraq is still immature. It began building slowly in 2003, as donors were enthusiastic about funding capacity-building of the young and direct implementation projects in areas like justice and conflict resolution. While this support helped increase the numbers of groups and the activities they carried out, it did not necessarily result in robust capacity. Now, with international attention to Iraq dwindling over the past few years, there has been less support for building civil society—including humanitarian groups...

‘There is an NGO forum in Iraq that includes Iraqi groups as well as INGOs, and is meant to be a coordinating and capacity-building body. There are also a number of national Iraqi NGOs that are registered, and have solid experience in humanitarian aid. In some cases, they partner with smaller local Iraqi groups and with the groups of volunteers that are managing to provide help to IDPs. With so many of the volunteer groups eager to be formally trained, both of these structures could be effective ways to reach out to those groups for capacity-building both organizationally and operationally.’²⁵

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²⁵ Refugee International, Field Report, Displaced in Iraq: Little Aid and Few Options, <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5633c6bfe4b03216fd2ea132/1446233807064/Displaced+in+Iraq%3A+Little+Aid+and+Few+Options>, pp. 8-11, accessed 31 March 2016

7.3 International support

7.3.1 In a September 2015 report, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stated:

‘The Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan, launched in June 2015, requests US\$498 million to provide life-saving assistance and protection to 5.6 million people from July to December. To date, 40 per cent has been received against this highly prioritised plan according to the online Financial Tracking Service. Funding is coming in slowly, but humanitarian needs are outpacing available resources, which is taking a toll on response capacity.’²⁶

7.3.2 An OCHA paper dated January 2016 noted that the Humanitarian Response Plan is 8% funded. Of the \$861 million requested, \$65 million has been received.²⁷ However, on OCHA’s website Humanitarian Response it reported that the HRP is 16% funded.²⁸

7.3.3 In February 2015, OCHA had detailed the UN’s Strategic Response Plan for Iraq covering 2014-2015, noting that it had requested US\$2.23 billion but had received only US\$833 million – 37%.²⁹ The HRP is a revision of the 2014/2015 Strategic Response Plan.³⁰

7.3.4 A report by Refugee International, dated November 2015, noted that, around August 2014

‘...many international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) moved their centers of operation out of Baghdad and into Erbil, in the KRI. This move served a practical purpose: groups wanted to make the most of providing support in areas they had access to, and the majority of the people who were in need of humanitarian aid and who could be reached without so much danger to service providers were in the three provinces of the KRI...Far less humanitarian assistance was reaching people in central and south Iraq, partly because there was little concrete information about their needs and how to deliver aid, and partly because active conflict made it practically impossible for humanitarian organizations to operate in those areas.’³¹

²⁶ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis Situation Report No. 62 (16 – 29 September 2015) https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/ocha_iraq_humanitarian_situation_report_62_16_-_29_september_2015.pdf, accessed 29 March 2016

²⁷ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Dashboard (as of 31 January 2016), https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/final_iraq_humanitarian_dashboard_jan_2016.pdf, accessed 30 March 2016

²⁸ Humanitarian Response, Iraq, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq>, accessed 30 March 2016

²⁹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Humanitarian Dashboard, 28 February 2015, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/iraq/infographic/iraq-humanitarian-dashboard-04-march-28-february-2014>, accessed 30 March 2016

³⁰ US Aid, Iraq – Complex Emergency, Fact Sheet # 6, Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, 26 June 2015, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1788_1438001558_iraq-ce-fs06-06-26-2015.pdf, accessed 1 April 2016

³¹ Refugee International, Field Report, Displaced in Iraq: Little Aid and Few Options, <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/506c8ea1e4b01d9450dd53f5/t/5633c6bfe4b03216fd2ea132/144>

7.3.5 The US Aid Agency detailed various sums of international assistance to Iraq: These included:

- Kuwait providing \$200 million in humanitarian assistance particularly to aid conflict-displaced Iraqi households in central and southern Iraq and the KRI;
- the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection announcing a funding commitment of €25 million (\$28 million), bringing their 2015 total to €63 million (more than \$70 million);
- Norway announcing a contribution of approximately \$15.1 million to provide relief assistance through the Committee of the Red Cross, UN agencies and NGOs;
- Australia committing approximately \$6.1 million to support the World Food Programme (WFP);
- the UK Department for International Development (DFID) pledging an extra £20 million (\$31.3 million), raising their total humanitarian support to £59.5 million (\$93.4 million)³² Since then DFID's assistance for the Iraq humanitarian response since the crisis began in mid-2014 to a total of approximately \$120 million.³³

7.3.6 The US Aid Agency, in a briefing dated March 2016, wrote:

'In coordination with the GoI Ministry of Health and local partners, UNICEF and the UN World Health Organization (WHO) launched a new round of countrywide polio vaccinations on May 26, targeting an estimated 5.7 million children younger than five years of age. Despite the presence of high-risk conditions for an outbreak, Iraq has remained free of the polio virus since April 2014, and the ongoing polio campaign—part of the GoI's and UN's overall polio outreach and vaccination efforts—has immunized up to 90 percent of children throughout Iraq. UNICEF and WHO plan to conduct four additional countrywide vaccination campaigns during the next 12 months; however, the GoI has reported a resource shortfall of \$45 million required to complete planned vaccinations through 2016. Any lapse in routine immunization coverage, especially for IDP and refugee populations, could heighten Iraq's susceptibility to the disease, according to WHO.³⁴

[6233807064/Displaced+in+Iraq%3A+Little+Aid+and+Few+Options](#), p. 4, accessed 31 March 2016

³² US Aid, Iraq – Complex Emergency, Fact Sheet # 6, Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, 26 June 2015, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1788_1438001558_iraq-ce-fs06-06-26-2015.pdf, accessed 1 April 2016

³³ US Agency International Development (USAID), Iraq – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, 4 March 2016, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/iraq_ce_fs02_03-04-2016.pdf, accessed 5 April 2016

³⁴ US Agency International Development (USAID), Iraq – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, 4 March 2016, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/iraq_ce_fs02_03-04-2016.pdf, accessed 5 April 2016

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Version Control and Contacts

Contacts

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Clearance

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from **August 2016**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Updated COI

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